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PLANS

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FLOOR
PLANS**
FIND YOURS
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about the cover

This cabin was designed to look like it had been there for ages.

See page 38

Photo by Heidi A. Long

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welcome

A Season for Giving Thanks



Dear Readers,

Welcome to the holiday issue of *Cabin Living*!

At the time of this writing, it's not even close to Thanksgiving yet, but putting this special issue together for you has put me in a reflective, thankful holiday mood. I am grateful for many blessings, starting with family, friends, my health, and of course, for being the editor of this magazine. Yes, it's a tough job immersing oneself in the cabin lifestyle, but someone has to do it, right?

One of the things I love about *Cabin Living* is the diversity of people, cabins and activities that our editors, writers and photographers get to cover. In the world of all things cabin, we all get to play, and there is no *right* way to do it.

In this issue, you'll visit retreats in Montana, Wisconsin, Colorado and New York, while in other issues you will travel with us to the Southeast, New England, the Southwest or the Pacific coast. Some of the folks we interview will call their retreats "cabins," some "cottages," others "camps" and still others "lake houses," and we may run into a "country home" or two. Some retreats sit alone on 100 acres of land in the Alaska wilderness, while some cozy up within earshot of neighbors on Minnesota's Gull Lake or New York's Finger Lakes. It's all good.

Speaking of cabins (aren't we always?), the retreats in this issue's three Cabin Tour features all happen to be log structures, but the "Unplugged Cabin" is a stick-built home. In upcoming issues of *Cabin Living*, you will also see timber-frame cabins, modular cabins, and more. Rustic or contemporary, lodge look or cottage style, your editors love them all.

And then there's the fun stuff. In this issue, you'll find advice for anglers, suggestions for enjoying winter at your cabin, a nostalgic "Now & Then" story, info about recent trends in snowmobiles, advice for the DIYer, a couple of good book recommendations and some delicious recipes. In future editions, you'll find stories about hiking, boating, paddling, riding PWCs and more. Kayaks and PWCs in the same magazine? Well, of course, *Cabin Living* is all about equal opportunity, live-and-let-live fun.

Yes, cabin country is a diverse and fascinating place. And I am very thankful for that, indeed.

Wishing you happy holidays and great times at the cabin,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark R. Johnson".

MARK R. JOHNSON
Editor

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Make a Blanket Statement

Photo by Robin Stubbert

Blankets can be essential when spending time in cabins, cottages and camps, where fresh air dictates that windows stay open even when the evenings are cool. But if you're keeping extra blankets in the closet or rumpled on hammocks, you're missing an opportunity to bring a little flair to bedrooms and living areas. Turn the page to read more!

**we asked
you answered**

WHAT DO YOU CALL YOUR FAVORITE BOAT?

MAID OF THE MOOSE

My wife and I are lucky enough to own a camp on Portage Lake in Portage, Maine. Our pontoon boat is Maid of the Moose.

— Ralph & Cindy Miller

FOUR SAIL

We have a pontoon boat that's small (16 feet), so not a lot of people can be aboard, so its name is Four Sail.

— Kelly

DEBTN80R

The name of our boat is DEBTN80R.

— Dave Smith

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**Whether you're seeking
more information about
the process of building your
dream home or looking for
DIY tips & tricks, our collection
of webinars and articles
is a great place to start.**

**Here is a sampling of the topics
you can read up on:**

- Choosing Logs (Profiles & Packages)
- Choosing Your Producer
- Energy Efficiency for Today's Log Home
- How Will Your Home Look and Live?
- Keep Your Eyes on the Prize
- Square Footage 101
- Staining Options for Your Log Home
- Your Log Home: Custom Design or Model Plan?

**Or sit back, relax and watch a few
videos and webinars:**

- Kitchen Confidential: Expert Tips for Bringing Your Dream Kitchen to Life
- Design Your Perfect Log Home
- Log Home Living: Cost Effective Design
- Developing Your Dream Home Budget
- Start Planning Your Dream Home Today

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Rocky Mountain Log Homes photo



from the deck

DESIGN & DÉCOR

Warm Up Your Décor with Blankets

HOW TO PUT THESE COMFY, COZY STYLEMAKERS TO GOOD USE

"In a more casual setting like a cabin, you can cover the seat to bring in a pop of color, even in a more rustic place," says Cathy Rowe, interior designer and owner at Well Dressed Interiors in Kennebunk, Maine. "And it can bring some protection from dirty kids or dirty dogs. I have a house on a river and when my dog comes in he may not be the cleanest. And kids have dirt on bare skin especially in summer. A well-placed blanket can protect furniture from sand on dirty feet and sticky hands from popsicles."

Many wool blankets – the plaids and stripes that have been so popular in cabins for years – can be scratchy and may seem a little tired. The traditional can get a fresh update when patterns and colors depart from the customary, like designs with more negative space, slightly offset lines, and colors that pop more than those from the Scottish Register of Tartans.

Texture, notes Rowe, whose specialty is fabrics, has as much potential as color to add to the mood in a room. Faux fur, open weaves and chunky fisherman-knits fit with the woodsy or waterside feel of many cabin interiors. And they're cuddly.

She suggests centering blankets down the middle of a couch rather than leaving them crumpled to the side, and they can be tucked all the way down onto the seat for a cascade effect. If you tend to need a few for reading on chairs or watching television, stack them neatly into a large basket for easy reach. In the bedrooms, keep an extra blanket draped, halved-then-folded, across the end of the bed. That interrupts the patterns or monotone of the bedspread, and saves your guests the task of rummaging through closets.

—Daphne Howland



SOURCE: Well Dressed Interiors, welldressedinteriors.com; RESOURCES: Cabin Place, cabinplace.com; The Cabin Shop, thecabinshop.com; Pendleton Woolen Mills, pendleton-usa.com; Woolrich, woolrich.com

Blanket photo courtesy Pendleton Woolen Mills



Last summer, my wife, Carol, and I traveled to one of our favorite cabins: a handcrafted log wonder near Ely, Minn. While we visited the Ely area, we enjoyed some of our favorite local foods: Red Cabin Custard, Canada's jam, Crapola granola (yes, that's the actual name) and Ely Wild Blueberry Soda.

What are the local foods and flavors in your cabin region? Our editors would love to hear from you! Please share at: cabinliving@aimmedia.com. Thanks!

—Mark R. Johnson, Editor

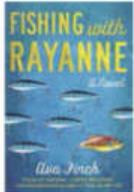


from the deck



FISHING WITH RAYANNE

by Ava Finch

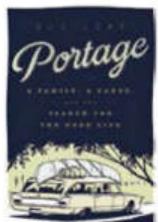


Looking for a light read for the cabin? Ava Finch introduces 34-year-old RayAnne Dahl, a self-confessed late bloomer who inadvertently lands a job as host of the first all-women fishing talk show. As she's trying to navigate those professional waters, her family life poses its own challenges: Mom is a New-Age coach to the menopausal rich, Dad is on his sixth marriage and RayAnne is caring for a handsome new rescue dog.

Lake Union Publishing, \$9.95, board book, 353 pages, upress.umn.edu

PORTAGE: A FAMILY, A CANOE, AND THE SEARCH FOR THE GOOD LIFE

by Sue Leaf



From the comfort of your favorite cabin sofa, paddle beneath sunny skies, brave storms, and run hair-raising rapids. A memoir of one family's 35-year venture into the watery expanse of the world, this book is part travelogue and part natural and cultural history. A trained zoologist, Sue Leaf writes frequently on environmental topics. She and her husband Tom have paddled the waters of North America for 40 years.

Minnesota Historical Society Press, \$16.95, hardcover, 264 pages, mnhspress.org



PHOTOGRAPHER MICHAEL FURTMAN

began outdoor photography in the mid-1980s, primarily as support for the outdoor and nature articles he wrote. Editors would say "nice story ... where are the photos?" And so it began.

For years, that was the extent of his photography. But in 2000, when he had a serious health issue and was unable to handle the rigors of writing, he decided to seriously pursue wildlife photography as a creative outlet and source of income.

Furtman's philosophy is simple – photograph every day, photograph everything. "Too many photographers seek only the unusual animals, the rare birds," he says. "And too many photographers think that a good wildlife image is something where the subject fills the frame. Me? I am as happy photographing a rabbit as a rhino, and I strive to capture the animal in its element and environment."

To see more of Furtman's work, visit michaelfurtman.com.



Wildlife photos by Michael Furtman

SETTING UP FOR A SNOWY WINTER!

"It must have heated seats!"

My wife made this her highest priority when we bought her little Ford Escape SUV last year, and her desire for comfort was just as important as her desire for functionality. The snowmobile business is doing much the same thing and catering even more to cabin owners and the baby-boomer generation who spend time in snowy climes in the winter.

MORE OPTIONS: Yep, they come with heated seats! Many of today's 4-stroke powered touring sleds, as well as limited-edition machines, come with heated seats ... just like your SUV. But that's not all; you can customize much of your sled right at the dealer. Manufacturers are offering more options than ever before in the history of the industry: things like factory approved turbo kits, Bluetooth connectivity, auxiliary fuel

tanks, track choices and much more.

But it is not just about accessories or add-on options; there are simply more vehicle/unit options available now. Clean technology like advanced fuel injection, direct-injection, and 4-stroke technology has proliferated in the industry. I'm the editor of *American Snowmobiler* magazine, which puts out a massive Buyers Guide each October, and this year we covered almost 200 in-season models. That doesn't even take into account special "spring buy" units or things like custom graphics.

Today, if you own a cabin in the Northwoods or up in the mountains, chances are that one of the four snowmobile manufacturers (Arctic Cat, Polaris, Ski-Doo, or Yamaha) make a machine that you and your family would love to explore winter on.

– Mark Boncher, *Editor of American Snowmobiler magazine*

Snowmobile photo by Ryan Thompson/RIT Photography



RESOURCES: *American Snowmobiler*, amsnow.com; Arctic Cat, arcticcat.com; Polaris Industries, polarisind.com; Ski-Doo, ski-doo.com; Yamaha Motor Sports, yamahamotorsports.com

NIGHT LIGHTS

Dear Cabin Living,

This was a beautiful display of Northern Lights above our cabin on Lake Louise, Alaska, on the night of January 2, 2015.

Sabra Neyman
Wasilla, Alaska



Your Cabin Living editors want to hear from you! Email cabinliving@aimmedia.com.

Hot Cocoa Bar

One of the sweetest perks at Big Cedar Lodge in Missouri's Ozark Mountains isn't the woodburning fireplace in each of the 81 log cabins. Nor is it the fishing. It's the hot chocolate. On the menu at Truman Coffee & Café is the Double-Chocolate Caramel Hot Cocoa.

And then there's the Mandarin Oriental, Washington, D.C.'s "Build Your Own Hot Chocolate" amenity – delivered to guests on a tray – includes house-made chocolate stirring sticks, hot milk, and toppings like M&Ms (served in cute little glass jars with lids).

Feeling inspired? Whether it's a touch of sweet (like caramel) or a super-hot kick (chili powder or Mayan spices), what makes cocoa so memorable is the ability

to customize. Do you like an inch of miniature marshmallows on top or just one big 'mallow? Are you more into milk, dark or white chocolate?

Take the time to build a hot-chocolate DIY bar and everyone walks away happy. Set out mugs and keep the hot chocolate simmering in the saucepan or slow cooker, allowing guests to get their own with a ladle. Check your spice cabinet for quick flavor boosts, like cinnamon, nutmeg, cumin or cardamom; and don't forget this cool stirring tool: a chocolate-dipped peppermint stick. Consider making the bar area festive with strands of twinkling lights overhead or a menu of the ingredients written on a tiny chalkboard and propped on a frame stand.

— Kristine Hansen



This is the Double-Chocolate Caramel Hot Cocoa, available at Truman Coffee & Café at Big Cedar Lodge on Table Rock Lake in Missouri.

SOURCES: Big Cedar Lodge, bigcedar.com; Mandarin Oriental, mandarinoriental.com/washington

FUN FESTIVALS IN CABIN COUNTRY

CHRISTMAS WALK

Grayling, Mich., November 21

With a theme of "Back Home to the Heart of Christmas," uptown Grayling will be aglow from 5-8 p.m. with the holiday spirit. Businesses will host entertainment, offer refreshments or set up special Christmas displays. Also, a Festival of Trees will be on display from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Grayling Mini Mall. grayling-mi.com



CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS WITH ALMANZO

Malone, N.Y., December 5

Tucked away in the village of Malone, just south of the Canadian border, is the Almanzo and Laura Ingalls Wilder Farm. On December 5, a holiday celebration includes readings from the "Farmer Boy Christmas Chapter" in the parlor of the farmhouse. During children's activities and singing of Christmas carols, cookies and mulled cider will be served. almanzowilderfarm.com

NEW YEAR'S FIREWORKS ON TABLE ROCK LAKE

Ridgedale, Mo., December 31

If you're the kind of cabin enthusiast who will rent a cabin for a destination vacation, you might want to consider renting one of the rustic-elegant cabins at Big Cedar Lodge to ring in the New Year. bigcedar.com

from the deck

LAKE ASSOCIATION SPOTLIGHT

NAME: Circle Lake Association

AREA SERVED: The Circle Lake and the Deer Lake watershed in Driscoll County and southern Dakota counties, Minnesota

MEMBERSHIP: 50 members, including 48 families.

MISSION/GOAL: The mission is to promote the improvement, protection, and preservation of the water quality, ecological balance, and environmental health of Circle Lake, its watershed, and vicinity.

"As with many lakes in southern Minnesota that are often being added to the list of lakes in decline for water quality, our wonderful Circle Lake has been added, too," says association board member Julie Dornbusch. "Our lake association and board have decided to take action. Our primary goal is to restore our lake to a healthy status, as it is beautiful and enjoyed by many!"

PROJECTS:

- Working with our county and local sportsmen clubs, the Circle Lake Association has applied for grants, hired an engineer to work on wetland restoration, installed fish grates to prevent

carp from entering the lake, has grown the lake's blue gill population, and has planted native plants along the lake's shorelines, for starters.

- Holding annual half-marathon, 10k and 5k races every September, the net profits go towards the Circle Lake Association's lake improvement fund. The race committee is run by members of the association, and the volunteer positions are filled from Circle Lake families. "The half-marathon takes the runners around our beautiful lake ('Circle the Lake Run'). It has truly become a first-class certified race," Dornbusch says.
- Holding "Chunky Dunk" event on New Years Day, during which people pay money to jump in the icy waters of Circle Lake, with funds going toward lake cleanup projects.

FUN FACT: The Chunky Dunk event was featured on CBS News.

AFFILIATIONS: We work with the Tri-Lakes Sportsmens Club, Cannon Valley Watershed, and Rice County," says Dornbusch.

WEBSITE: circlelake.org



Courtesy Circle Lake Association

One of the Circle Lake Association's successful fundraising activities is the annual Chunky Dunk event during which people pay money to jump into icy Circle Lake.

share your story

Does your lake have an association that's improving water quality? Do you belong to a land association that is always looking out for its members? To tell us more about the good work your association is doing, email cabinliving@aimmedia.com.

Please include two or three high-resolution photos of your lake or cabin area.



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December is usually either a time when your fishing equipment has been put away until spring returns and you start thinking

REELS – Clean with soapy water, but rinse thoroughly. Lightly grease the gears and any external moving parts. Check the drag to make sure it is working as it should and, if not, replace the drag washers. If you're going to store your reel for an extended time, loosen the drag all the way to take tension off the line. Use your manufacturer's website info to guide you in taking apart your reel for repairs



Prepping for spring

about fishing again or it's a time when you are getting out your ice fishing gear in preparation for hard water fishing.

Either way, December is a good time to think about equipment maintenance so you are ready, no matter when it is, for your next fishing trip.

Each piece of your fishing equipment should be checked over and repaired or replaced if needed.

RODS – Inspect for missing or bent guides and replace if needed. Clean the rod with soapy water, and oil the threads on the reel seat.

or maintenance, but if you're not comfortable with doing that, go to a local repair shop in your area or send it in to the manufacturer.

LINE – If you are getting ready to store your reels until spring it is best to remove all line but don't replace until you are ready to start fishing again. If you're getting ready for winter fishing it is always best to put fresh line on your reel before you go.

LURES – If lips are cracked or broken you are better off replacing the lure. If the body is just beat up a little use lure paint to touch it up. Either sharpen or replace hooks. While

you're at it inventory all your lures and buy what you need.

TACKLE BOX – Take everything out and clean and organize so everything is easy to find when you need it.

Is doing all this a lot of work? Sure it is, but taking time for maintenance will mean your time on the water will be spent catching fish instead of repairing equipment or looking for that favorite lure.

Larry Whiteley hosts the Bass Pro Shops Outdoor World Radio Show, basspro.com.

fotolia.com/mepoophyaphoto

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Q&A

BY DAPHNE HOWLAND

How to Organize Winter Gear

Q Hello, love your magazine! We are planning an addition to our cabin in California's Sierra Nevada mountains. We use it in the winter when we go snowmobiling (when we have snow!). Winter access is by snowmobile only. The main purpose of the addition is to create a mud/snow entry room. We want locker-room style benches, plus shelves & hooks to store each guest's gear, from boots to helmets. We also want a heating/drying system to speed up drying of wet gear. Can you give me suggestions for who to contact about the heating system? Do you have any examples of mud/snow room configurations? Thanks for your help!

—Sally McFarlane, via email

A You onto something — a locker-room style approach is an excellent idea for that transition from outdoor activities and a good way to keep gear out of the way. But you don't want your mountain cabin mudroom to have the clangy character of the local YMCA — especially since, like yours, many mudrooms also serve as a cabin's entrance. The designers at Interiors Etc.

To help store gear, the essential elements of a sports locker room can be part of a deluxe mudroom, without the clangy doors or locks.

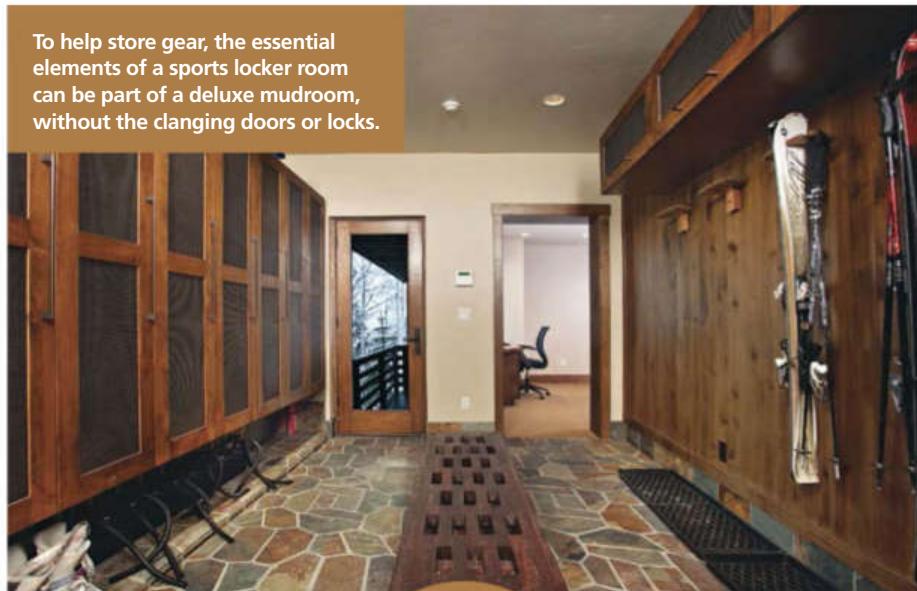


Photo by Jeremy Swanson, courtesy Interiors, Etc., Grand Junction, Colo., interioretc.com

in Grand Junction, Colo., had the same idea, and found several excellent ways to leverage the essential strengths of a locker room — the lockers themselves and a nice long, just wide-enough bench — while adding design elements that bring character to a cabin's entryway. They also found some excellent solutions that help gear dry faster after a day in the snow.

A mudroom with this approach can be built with all sorts of hideaway spots for gear — cubbies above, below, and underneath. The key when storing a lot of ski gear, as you note, is speeding up drying time so that dampness doesn't turn into mold.

One ingenious solution from Interiors Etc. is the use of copper mesh, which gives those locker-style gear cubbies both ventilation and a more attractive look. The mesh, a decorative metal grille from Van Dykes is used in the door panels. The grille's weave is just tight enough to hide all the gear, yet wide enough to allow air to circulate through the closet. Jackets and other gear won't stay damp (or get moldy) even when tucked away. Interiors Etc. designer Kirk Granum calls it a decorative way to make a functional door.

The mesh insert ensures that air gets in and out of the closed door, so you can put something damp in there, and it's not

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enclosed, Granum says, and he chose copper for a less contemporary feel, more suitable for cabins than, say, stainless

steel. The cubbies are also raised up, with open bottoms and space underneath to allow gear to drip. In one setup, heater-dryers are tucked underneath. Skis fit on hooks across the room. Meanwhile, holes are incorporated into the design of a lovely locker-room style bench in the middle, so melting snow can drip onto the easy-to-clean, flake-resistant gauged slate floor.

The heaters and dryers that you're looking for, and which Granum has tucked under those lockers with their thawing gear, come in a range of sizes, performance levels, and prices, from a variety of retailers and manufacturers.

So-called boot dryers actually dry just about everything from gloves and boots to helmets, and are used by college and pro-level hockey and football teams as well as fire departments, says Hunter Bailey at Heater Craft, which manufactures two-, four-, eight-, 14-, 23-, and 48-pair boot heaters. The attachments that allow for the drying of equipment beyond boots may require a separate purchase. In addition to Heater Craft, larger units can be found at CozyWinters.com. Smaller equipment can be found at places like REI and Cabela's.

RESOURCES: Van Dyke's Restorers, vandykes.com; Heater Craft, heatercraft.com; Cozy Winters, cozywinters.com; REI, rei.com; Cabela's, cabelas.com

Q When was the first log cabin built in the U.S.? And what is the oldest surviving log cabin in this country?

— Joe Hartman, via email

A It's no surprise that enterprising settlers who found themselves in the woods built shelters from trees, an ample and hardy resource. It's not really certain, however, when people began building log structures. Historians have traced their use to as far back as the Bronze Age, (around 3,500 B.C.) in northern areas of Europe like Finland, Sweden and Germany, and in northern Russia, according to the National Park Service. The wood in the forests in those areas was especially conducive to building long-lasting homes, and the tradition of building log cabins has continued there to this day.

By the time Europeans came to what is now the U.S. in the 17th century, building log cabins was an established practice.



Photo courtesy Wikimedia Commons

Finns and Swedes were the first ones to build log cabins here, in the Swedish colony of Nya Sverige (New Sweden) near the Delaware and Brandywine Rivers. Pioneers from other countries, including the English pilgrims, quickly adopted their longstanding techniques.

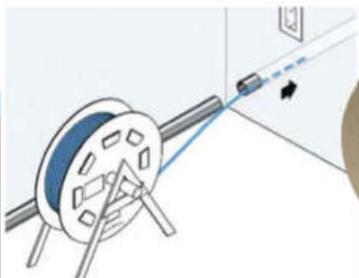
One of oldest known cabins in the U.S. is also still standing, thanks to ongoing restoration work by its owners over the years. The Nothnagle Cabin, built by Finnish pioneers between 1638 and 1643, has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1976. [CL](#)

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now & then



Traipsing through the snow is much more fun riding piggyback. Here the author hitches a ride from her big brother Dan.

Courtesy the author

Back in Time

How would you like to spend Christmas at the cabin?" **BY CHRISTY HEITGER-EWING**

I knew I was in trouble when I asked my son Kyler what he wanted for Christmas, and he replied, "A time machine."

Gee whiz, when I was a kid, all I wanted was a winking Western Barbie.

"Where would you go in your time machine?" I asked out of curiosity.

"Back to 1985," Kyler said.

Interesting that he picked '85; that was the first time as a young girl that I – and my family, of course – spent the Christmas holiday at the cabin ...

The gear my parents packed for winter was much bulkier than the summer stuff that filled the car just months earlier. In place of flip-flops and sunscreen, we tossed in ice skates and snow boots. Instead of tank tops and water skis, we grabbed earmuffs and plastic sleds. Rather than life jackets and lemonade, we brought along lip balm and hot chocolate mix.

As we drove down the cabin's powder-covered lane, I cracked the window of our lipstick red Chevy Blazer and was struck by the breathless silence in the air. Gravel didn't crunch beneath our tires. Leaves

didn't rustle in the blowing breeze. Dogs didn't bark down on the docks. Children didn't splash out in the water. Boat motors didn't roar in the distance. Everything was beautifully still.

My brother Dan and I exited the vehicle and trudged through mounds of snow to reach the lake, only instead of jumping in like we did in the summer, we slid around on top like a couple of playful harp seals.

"Look, everyone!" Dan announced, motioning across the lake. "An untouched blanket of white as far as the eye can see."

I stood in awe at the edge of the frozen lake, mesmerized by the cabin's soft, fluffy landscape. Then suddenly – pow – Dan pelted me in the back with a snowball. I knelt down and started rolling my own winter weapon, ready to wage an epic arctic fight.

"Time out!" Dad called. "First thing's first. We need a Christmas tree!"

Dad grabbed a saw, and we climbed the hill across the road to access the back edge of our property. We didn't hike back there in the summer because it was too overgrown with weeds and thorny bushes.

The barren landscape of winter, however, allowed us to explore and find a 5-foot-tall white pine with silky needles, a symmetrical shape, and a slightly crooked trunk.

Upon returning to the cabin, we lit the potbellied stove, sang Christmas carols, and decorated our tree with shiny green balls, bright red ribbon, and strings of tasty popcorn. I stared out the frosted window at the puffy snowflakes that gently fell from the sky. They were the intricate looking ones that elementary school art teachers replicate with construction paper and hang from classroom ceilings.

I was safe, warm, happy, and at peace. There was no place on earth I'd rather be. And reminiscing about this warm childhood memory gave me an idea.

"How would you like to spend Christmas at the cabin?" I asked Kyler. It was the closest thing there was to going back in time.

His eyes grew wide as he flashed me the biggest smile I'd seen since the start of boating season.

"Really?" Kyler asked as he wrapped his arms around me. "Did you hear that, Trevyn?" he asked his little brother. "We're gonna spend Christmas at the lake!"

"That reminds me!" Trevyn exclaimed. "I finished my wish list for Santa. I want a jet pack like Boba Fett and some live minions to play with."

"I'm sure Santa will get right on that," I said. "So, Kyler, about this time machine: I'm just curious ... why did you choose the year 1985?"

"I thought it would be fun to hang out with you as a kid," he said. "Were you cool, Mom?"

"Hey, I had a Barbie who could wink," I said. "Need I say more?"

Kyler smiled and shook his head.

"Well, at least you're cool now, Mom," Kyler said.

"Yeah," Trevyn piped in. "Cuz she's taking us to the cabin." **CL**



Christy Heitger-Ewing thinks that if everyone could experience life at a cabin, the world would be a happier place.

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The Longest Mile

Some cabins are worth a grueling hike in deep snow

STORY & PHOTOS BY JOHN DIGIROLAMO

Well, I don't actually own a cabin. But, I love the mountain cabin lifestyle. Occasionally, my family and I enjoy cabin living by spending a few days at one of the Summit Huts in Breckenridge, Colo. These rustic cabins are not accessible by road. The only way to get to them is to hike, snowshoe or cross-country ski while toting all of your food and supplies.

In March 2011, we went to Francie's Cabin. Our party of six included my wife, Kathy, daughters Nicole (18) and Megan (14), and cousin Susie and her fiancé, Matt. What an adventure it was! Francie's Cabin sits 11,264 feet above sea level, and there are two ways to get there: a longer, flatter way (4 miles) and a shorter, steeper trail (1 mile). We had once snowshoed to a hut in the 10th Mountain Division Hut Association system, dragging our sled about three miles on a flat trail into the wilderness, so we were confident that a longer trail would be a piece of cake.

It was noon on a perfectly sunny, 25°F day when we loaded all of our stuff (75 pounds worth, including 15 pounds of trail mix) onto two sleds for a two-night adventure. We might have over-packed.

The day before, the area had received about 2 feet of snow, and no one had broken trail yet, so we set out snowshoeing through fresh powder. The ladies were leading, trying to pack the snow, while Matt and I each dragged a sled. Two hours later, we realized that we'd only gone a mile. Everyone was getting worried that it would take too long in this deep powder to go another three miles. Reluctantly, we played it safe and turned around.

Back at the car, we considered getting a hotel room and trying again in the morning, but it was spring break, so no rooms were available. We decided to check out the one-mile trail. It was now about 3 p.m., and we were discussing our options when a cross-country skier came down from the trail. He said the snow was packed, and it would be "easy" to get to the cabin.

We were inspired, but after snowshoeing for an hour, I was getting really tired and asked my wife to help pull the sled. The trail wasn't exactly as "packed down" as the skier had indicated. Nicole and Megan helped Matt pull his sled, while Susie acted as our lookout. What were we thinking? With a 20% grade, this trail only went one way: straight up!

It was so tiring pulling the heavy sled that we had to take a break every other minute. I was worried that we wouldn't arrive at the cabin before nightfall. Was I going to have to remember survival tips I'd read once in a magazine? Finally, after more than two hours of very slow snowshoeing, we could see the cabin in the fading light at the top of a hill. We literally had to crawl up the last 100 yards, digging our snowshoe spikes into the snow to make sure the weight of the sleds wouldn't drag us back down. I've never been so exhausted in my life, but we made it!

The rustic, two-story log cabin was awesome. It had room for 20 people, a woodstove and a gas range. Fresh snow was our water source. The outhouse was even inside. That's what I call mountain luxury!

The next day we woke up to a blizzard, so we decided to stay inside



COLORADO



relaxing, talking, playing games, drinking hot chocolate and just enjoying the beauty of the mountains and the peacefulness that a cabin can bring.

There were some unoccupied rooms, and I assumed that whoever made that reservation would never make it in the storm. But that afternoon, two families came up the hill with several children less than 10 years old, and the adults towed sleds as if they were weightless. It turned out that these 20-something parents were volunteers for Colorado's Alpine Rescue Team. They later said that they came to this cabin because it was "the easiest one to get to with little kids." I declined to tell them that our walk was the most physically demanding experience of my life.

Everybody we met at the cabin was friendly, and we engaged in interesting conversations. (Somehow, it is easier to bond while in a cabin.) It was also great to spend time with my daughters without interruptions from cell phones, text messages, e-mails or other distractions. They wouldn't be kids much longer, so I treasured this opportunity.

The next day, it was easy to get down the hill, and from the reverse perspective, we were amazed that we'd actually made it. To this day, I fondly remember the family time, the beauty of the wilderness, and going to the brink of our physical capabilities to conquer the mountain. Someday, I hope to live in a cabin in the mountains, preferably one that does not require crawling to get to the front door.

WANTED: YOUR CABIN STORY & PHOTOS

Every issue of *Cabin Living* magazine features at least two "My Cabin" stories, which are reader-submitted stories and photos. Send your cabin story to: cabinliving@aimmedia.com, and your *Cabin Living* editors may publish it. (All that is needed is a brief story about your cabin, cottage, lake home or camp – how you came to own it, why it's special to you, and what you enjoy doing there. Photos need to be high-resolution.) Thank you!

Up North in Wisconsin

Where the squirrels and the otters play

STORY & PHOTOS BY PAT KROHLOW

my spot Up North is on the Peshtigo River and High Falls Flowage. We are 15 miles northwest of Crivitz, Wis.

My cabin isn't as grand as most of those featured in *Cabin Living* magazine. That said, my cabin life is second to none.

For example, I remember the time that we woke up to a sunny, but brisk, zero degree day:

As the sun peeked over the tree line, the ice in the river started to melt. The eagles soared over the open water hoping to spot a fish for breakfast.

Tracks in the newly fallen snow told me the pheasant and grouse had come out to gravel up on the edge of the road, and two deer had crossed the yard over night.

The birds were noisy and hungry. Nuthatches, finches, chickadees, juncos and mourning doves were in continuous flight to and from the birdfeeders. Blue jays and red polls were at nature's bird feeders – the pines and cedars.

A squirrel was waiting patiently, praying the birds would drop a few seeds in the snow for his snack.

The otters bobbed up and down in the river, playing otter games as they usually do.

As the sun dropped behind the trees, the river began to freeze again, setting up for tomorrow's show.

Life Up North is good. **CL**

PESHTIGO RIVER

WISCONSIN



DURING A MORNING DRIVE, I TOOK THREE PHOTOS THAT REMINDED ME OF THE BEAUTY OF WINTER: A BEACHED BOAT AT FISCHER'S CAMP, PICNIC TABLES AT RAPIDS CAMPGROUND AND MY FAVORITE OLD BARN.



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To learn about advances in wood-burning technologies, go to page 68.

Cabin Warmth

Beat winter's chill and make your place cozy

BY DALE MULFINGER

The warmth of cabin living can be felt in the charm of a structure's rustic character combined with the experiences shared with family and friends.

Yet, for those of us who don't limit our cabin use to summertime, we also want our cabins to keep us warm when it's cold. If you're planning a cross-country ski weekend, and you arrive at a frozen cabin, an open fireplace will do little to heat the thermal mass of the structure until you're ready to leave on Sunday. It will take a lot of hot grog to warm your spirits, and you will be contemplating heating alternatives for your next winter sojourn.

So, what are your options? A wood stove gives off heat quicker. Then again, some electric heating units you could have turned on from your cell phone a few days earlier might have been a better solution.

Analyzing the situation

When it comes to cabin warmth, there are many choices, and they all start with

understanding the use pattern of your favorite getaway. Are you likely to use the place only for a few winter weekends or do you want to keep the plumbing in working order all winter long?

You'll also need to know what energy supplies you have access to: trees, electricity, gas, wind generation. Heating our cabins is quite different from heating our homes in or near the metropolis. There, we usually have access to electricity and natural gas.

Choices for heating

At our primary homes, most of us don't have patience for high temperature swings so we seek to air condition for part of the season. Thus, forced-air systems driven by gas or electricity are the preferred choice.

Wood burning — Cabins, on the other hand, are a natural for using some form of wood heat, since we often build our retreats near or in a forest. In addition, if we aren't keen on chain saws and wood

splitting, there is usually someone nearby willing to sell us a cord or two of wood. And who doesn't enjoy the flickering flame and smell of burning wood?

Consider using insulation that's 50% greater than code to boost your energy savings.

The best burning device is a wood stove, or a sealed fireplace that performs like a wood stove. A thorough study of wood-burning performance will help you select the stove that's best for you.

If you're the person responsible for splitting the wood, it won't take but a few seasons to appreciate that you'll need only two cords of wood instead of four to make it through a heating season.

Backup heat source — But even with a good warm coat, you'll still need a source of heat when you're not around. And here is where everything gets more complicated. Heat has two major components: a fuel source and a distribution system. On the source side, you'll have to research what's available at your site: electricity, natural or propane gas, fuel oil, or geothermal, which is also run off of electricity. On the distribution side, you have forced air, hydronic infloor heat, radiators, or direct-current electric heaters. And for the most part, several of the fuel sources work with several of the distribution systems.

Prices for fuel vary over time, so it's best to study recent price history and reflect on what experts predict for the prices in the future. You might even consider two fuel sources, so you can play with energy markets. Some local power companies offer off-peak rates for heating systems, which use heat storage.

Planning ahead

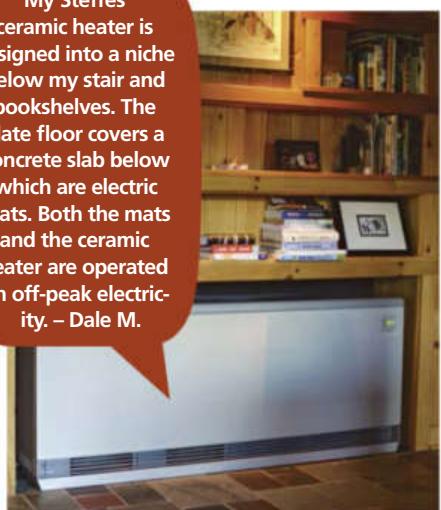
If you're planning to build (or rebuild) a cabin, you can request additional insulation for exterior walls, the ceiling and even under the slab. Check local building codes to find out what the recommended R-value is for your location. Then, you might want to consider using insulation

MY ANSWER TO COLD CABIN DAYS

One good measure of the heat you'll need for your cabin is the degree-day chart of the United States. This chart measures the number of hours in one season in which your location will experience temperatures below 65 degrees. My cabin exists in the 10,000 zone. Brrr.

As it so happens, in my cabin in a very cold Arrowhead Region of northern Minnesota, off-peak rates are 60% cheaper, so I have in-floor electric mats under my slab and two ceramic storage units, one on each level of my cabin. Storage units are efficient to run but slow to respond to desired increases in temperature. Therefore, I have a few direct electric baseboard units on regular rate power, and a wood stove that kicks out heat swiftly as well. **RESOURCE:** pnwpest.org/US

My Steffes ceramic heater is designed into a niche below my stair and bookshelves. The slate floor covers a concrete slab below which are electric mats. Both the mats and the ceramic heater are operated on off-peak electricity. – Dale M.



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Think of your cabin just like that warm parka you put on in the winter, down-filled and snug as a bug. **CL**



Cabinologist Dale Mulfinger regularly designs cabins with Minnesota-based SALA Architects, teaches cabin classes and gives talks on cabin design across North America. He has authored five cabin-centric books.

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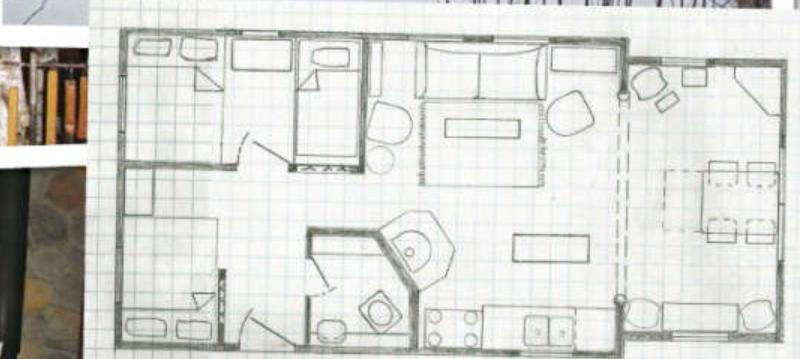
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CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: The Whalens built the kitchen island and other furnishings from fallen birch trees on the property. Lisa rusticated store-bought pieces with birch twigs or bark. Kitchen and bedroom shelving were made from wood salvaged from a partially burned lumberjack's cabin that stood on the property.

■ The dining room addition multitasks as the game room. The willow chair was made by a Wisconsin artisan. ■ The cabin sits on a 4-foot-high platform for a better view of the river. The area underneath is used for storage. A 10x16-foot screen porch extends the cabin's living space. ■ The floor plan reveals the Whalens' no-frills approach to designing a compact getaway that sleeps eight.

A Winter Wonderland

A cozy off-grid cabin for an outdoorsy Minnesota family **BY FRAN SIGURDSSON**

December can be mighty cold in northern Minnesota. But Tom and Lisa Whalen's off-grid cabin near Grand Rapids is warm and cozy, thanks to good insulation and an efficient woodstove. In fact, the 1970s-era Scandia generates so much heat that the Whalens often find that they need to open windows.

Winter is the Whalen's favorite season

at "Makwa," as they call their retreat. (The word is Ojibwe for the black bear that roam these parts.) Ella and Mason, the couple's grandchildren, call it "the special cabin."

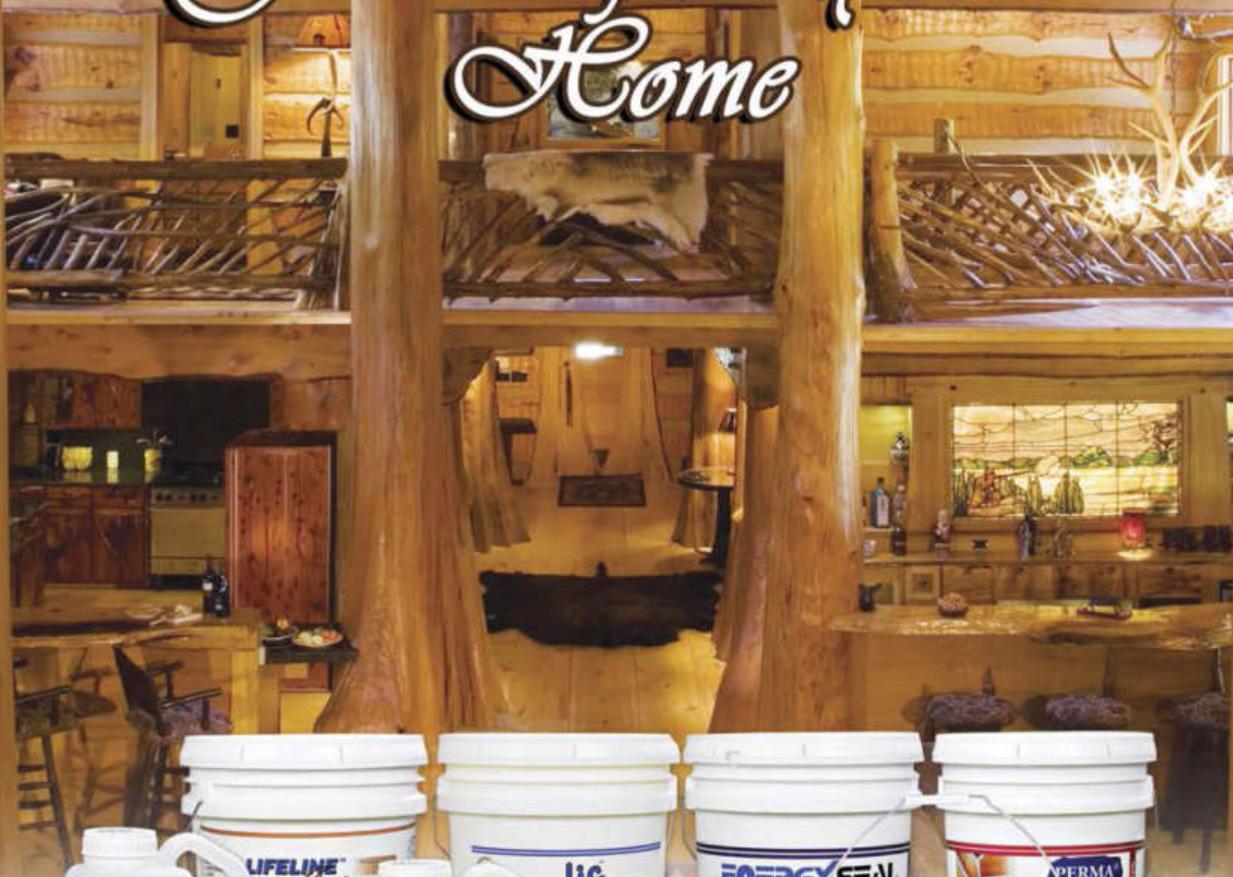
Quality family time

Ella and Mason love to strap on snowshoes and explore the 63-acre wooded property with the grownups. The cabin

is on the banks of the Mississippi, so ice-skating on the oxbow pond in the bend of the river is another fun activity. Other times, the Whalens cross-country ski, or take to the extensive network of snowmobile trails in the area.

At night, cabin-goers recount the day's adventures over dinner cooked on a vintage propane stove, followed by a lively round of card or board games. There is

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Photo depicts a 10" cabin appearance kit.

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ALL GAS, ALL THE TIME

PROPANE-FUELED GAS LAMPS like the Humphrey lamps in this retreat are a great option for lighting a remote off-grid cabin. The Humphrey indoor model, as well as similar brands such as Falk, has a preformed mantle and standard propane nozzle.

The Humphrey lamp emits the equivalent of a 70-watt bulb. Gas lamps also throw off a lot of heat, says Ron Rix, technician at Humphrey Products in Kalamazoo, Mich. The indoor gas lamp was developed in the early 1900s at Humphrey, then known as the General Gas Light Co.

Today, the Humphrey lamp is made by Midstate Lamp Co. in Arthur, Ill. (Mid-state also makes another model known as the 450, which rivals a 100-watt bulb.)

The lamps can be mounted on the wall or hung from a ceiling with a pendant kit. It's best to leave the installation to your propane dealer, who will plumb it to your gas supply with copper tubing. If you are a DIYer, have a serviceman inspect for gas leaks before use.

Because you have to light the lamp

with a match, lamps should be used in a ventilated area only, free of combustible liquids such as gasoline.

Some tips from the Humphrey gas lamp owner's manual:

- Gas flow through the nozzle must be aimed straight down the center of the Bunsen tube. To ensure proper air flow and gas mixture, the inside of the Bunsen tube must be clean and free of debris or spider webs.
- When gaslight is operating properly, gas consumption is 2,000 Btu per hour. One "pound" of propane gas produces approximately 12 hours of light. Propane gas must be to this rating: 2,500 to 2,530 Btu per cubic foot.
- The gas tank regulator must be adjusted to operate at a pressure of 11 inches of water column (27.9 cm; 6 oz. of mercury). This same pressure must be maintained at the nozzle of the gaslight.
- Each time the lamp is used, the mantle should be inspected for carbon deposits. Clean or replace if necessary.

no TV, no computer, no landline phone, either, and cell service is sketchy.

"Our goal was to focus on the outdoors and quality family time," explains Lisa, an interior designer. "We wanted to create a restful, low-impact family retreat. We didn't need another house to go to." Being off the grid, they reasoned, would help them achieve this goal – and save money, too.

The beginning

An off-grid cabin that Tom's grandfather and father – both were carpenters – built in Wisconsin served as their inspiration. The current owners, Tom's sister and her husband, have kept the place unplugged. "One summer we went up there," recalls Lisa, "and said it would be wonderful to have a place like this."

In 1996, the couple purchased a remote site overlooking the river, and Lisa drew up plans for a small cabin. She and Tom did all the construction, relying on woodworking skills that Tom learned from his dad. "We handled most everything ourselves," adds Tom, an electrical engineer. Although they borrowed a generator for the construction, the two used few power tools besides a circular saw. The original 459-square-foot cabin was completed in 1997.

Finishing touches

In 2011, the Whalens built an 8½×15-foot addition, boosting the retreat's square footage to 586 square feet. "Although it's quite small," says Lisa, "with its vaulted ceilings and good design, it feels quite spacious, and can comfortably sleep eight."



Wall-mounted gaslights illuminate the cabin. Propane also powers a whirlpool bath, undercounter fridge and a cherished 1940s Hardwick stove that belonged to Tom's grandmother.

The couple pump water by hand from a 15-foot well they dug. The water is then carried to the sink in a 7-gallon container with a spigot. The sink drains into the ground outside. Another 2-gallon container with a spigot is kept in the little port-a-potty room, added so that no one has to go outside in winter. The cabin also has an outside shower stall.

The cabin is about a half-mile from the highway, accessed via a two-rut grass driveway. During the winter, the Whalen make the 3-hour drive from their home outside Minneapolis as often as possible. The couple park on the road and snowmobile in, towing supplies by sled. "We make two or three runs in," says Tom. His one concession this past winter? Having someone plow a parking spot in advance. **CL**

Do you have an off-grid retreat? If so, long-time CL contributor Fran Sigurdsson would love to hear from you! If you send us an email at cabinliving@aimmedia.com, we'll forward it to her Adirondack lake house.

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At just 700 square feet, the Elk Cabin is truly petite

What More Do You Need?

A tiny cabin located in northwestern Montana provides everything this nature-loving couple could desire

STORY BY
MELISSA MYLCHREEST

PHOTOS BY
HEIDI A. LONG



Nestled into mature forest and overlooking a lake, this petite home is a classic portrait of the ideal Montana cabin. It was the second cabin built on the property of wildlife expert Jack Hanna and his wife, Suzi.

Some celebrities are notorious for building cabins that are more like rambling palaces built with scant consideration for the aesthetics of the landscape or the local traditions. This is especially true in Montana, where Hollywood heroes are known to buy up ranches and build multimillion-dollar lodge-style vacation homes that stretch the limit of what might truly be considered a cabin.

Not so in the case of Jack Hanna and his wife Suzi. Then again, Hanna doesn't

consider himself a celebrity either, despite what others might say. "I don't like the word 'celebrity,'" he says. "I don't like the word 'star,' either. I don't like any of those words. That's not me."

The world-renowned wildlife expert and TV personality (if you must call him something, he prefers "Animal Ambassador") could easily have gone the same mega-lodge route as others when he decided to buy property and build a cabin retreat in Montana. But that just wouldn't be his style.

"A lot of times, people in these small

communities see people like me moving in and think, 'Oh, gosh, what's he going to do?'" he says, in reference to the influx of outside influences and tastes. "Well, I tell you what. I have a little farm up there – it's a farm, not a ranch – on 40 acres, and some trails and a few small cabins for my family."

And when he says small, he's not kidding. Coming in at just 700 square feet, the Elk Cabin is truly petite. But really, argues Hanna, what more do you need? "When we were building it, we really didn't know what we were doing. But I



Designed and built by a stonemason working with traditional techniques, the fireplace provides the striking – and cozy – focal point for the interior.

figured, hey, it's a cabin – four walls, one room downstairs, a loft upstairs, put a kitchen in, and that's it."

An adventure in building

Builder Randy Baker concurs – not only on the apparent simplicity and humility of the Hannas' aesthetic, but on the somewhat haphazard approach they took to building this, the second cabin on the property. It must be noted that Baker, like Hanna, also prefers a different kind of title. "I always tell Jack, 'I'm not a carpenter.' And he says, 'Yeah, okay, right, you're not a carpenter.' And I say, 'No, I'm a handyman. But I think we can figure this carpentry thing out.'"

And over a 20-year relationship with

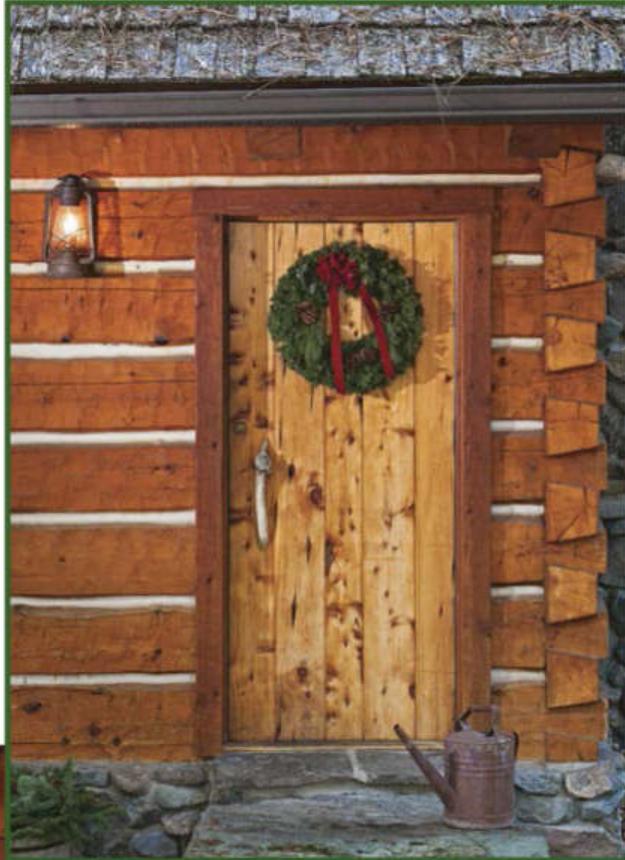
Hanna and several cabins later, he admits that maybe he's figured a few things out. But he also enjoys recounting the process of building the Elk Cabin, which took place in 1996:

"Jack called me up and said, 'The guys from Logcrafters are on their way up, and they're bringing logs.' So they brought a crane up to stack them, and then we're building this thing, and we'd actually gotten most of it done. I'm sitting up there on the roof one day, and Jack shows up. He pulls this tube out of the truck and says, 'Well, obviously you don't need these.' And I say, 'What's that, Jack?' And he says, 'Well, they're the plans!' See, they didn't leave me any plans. We were just winging it the whole

project. So he put them back in the truck and that was the end of the plans. We never did see them."

Luckily, Baker's handyman skills and common sense proved up to the task, and two decades later, the Elk Cabin is still as sturdy and charming as ever. Made of locally harvested and hewn timbers, it's truly the quintessential log cabin. Simply outfitted, the rustic furnishings and spare decorations let the warm wood of the interior speak for itself. Quilts and blankets abound, inviting cozy relaxation. Tucked into the trees, it's a secluded hideaway that boasts a beautiful, meticulously built fireplace, an old-fashioned claw-foot tub, and a comfy porch overlooking cherry orchards.

"The fireplace was built by an older



A CHINK IN TIME

PART OF THE APPEAL of a true log cabin is timelessness of the design. Very little about the technology of log-home building has changed over the centuries, and although the introduction of things like cranes and power tools have hastened the process, the basic rules still apply.

One of the most iconic and distinctive attributes of the log cabin is the presence of chinking and daubing, which creates the horizontal white stripes that are apparent between each log. While stylistic choices for the application of chinking and daubing vary, the purpose is always the same: to provide the final seal between indoors and outdoors and to keep pesky things like wind, rain, and mice at bay.

The two-part process consists first of the chinking, which is a bulkier material used to fill the space between logs. Traditionally, builders used whatever they had handy, from wood scraps to rocks, which they held in place with a softer material, such as clay or moss. Once the chinking is established, the daubing – a rough clay-based mixture – is troweled into the space and smoothed flat to hold everything in place and provide the final barrier against the elements.

With an efficient kitchen, utilitarian furnishings, and a tiny footprint, simplicity rules the day at the Hannas' cabin.





ABOVE: Locally harvested timbers make up the majority of the Hanna cabin.

TOP LEFT: While many celebrities prefer fancy accommodations, the Hannas are content with the basics: a loft bedroom, a log bed frame, and a forest view.

TOP RIGHT: A claw-foot tub highlights the historic feel of the cabin.

stonemason, who has since passed on. And if you looked at his work next to the younger guys, there was no comparison,” says Baker. “It took him a while. I don’t know how many months, actually. But it turned out really neat. It’s not very big, but it has so much character.”

Why Montana?

So why would a globetrotter like Jack Hanna build his retirement home in Montana, anyway? “I’ve traveled the world – South America, Africa, Australia,” says Hanna. “But the reason we chose Montana is very simple: I love the people, I love the climate – all four seasons of the year – and more than anything, my wife and I love hiking. There’s no better place in the world to go hiking than Glacier National Park.”

He goes on to site other attributes of the area that have earned his affection as well, in particular, the proximity to Flathead Lake, and the plethora of wildlife that frequents his property. “We’ve had elk, moose, wolf, black bears, mountain lions, and there’s been a bald eagle nest

there for the past three years,” he says. And, even though he’s made a living amongst animals and the natural world, he also appreciates the trappings of civilization. “We’re near this beautiful little village, but we’re also pretty close to Kalispell, which has a great hospital. You come out of the wilderness, and it feels like the big city. You can’t ask for anything more, way up in the corner of Montana.”

He admits that some of his friends are a little baffled by his penchant for the place, especially since he’s been returning to the state, year after year, for decades. But he remains unfazed. “They ask me, ‘Gosh, what do you do out there? It’s the middle of nowhere!’ ” he says. “But you know, I’ve been going out there since 1984. That’s 30 years, and I’ve still only done 10% of the things I want to do. There’s so much more. Montana takes a lifetime to discover, and that’s what I intend to do.” **CL**

Melissa Mylchreest is based in Western Montana. When she's not writing, she spends as much time as possible outside.

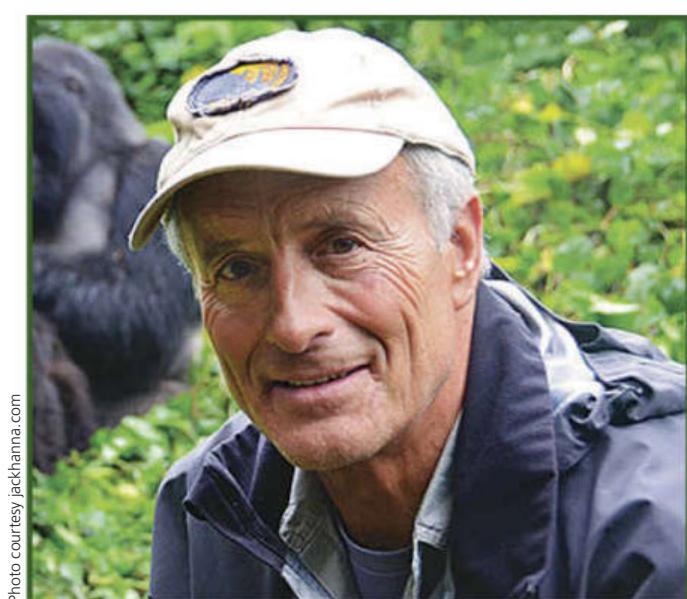


Photo courtesy jackhanna.com

ALWAYS AN ANIMAL AMBASSADOR

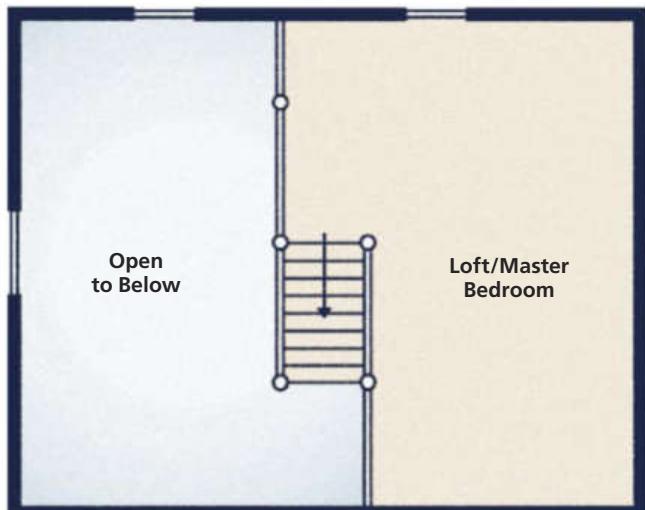
JACK HANNA, also known as "Jungle Jack" is a renowned wildlife expert, TV personality, and director emeritus of the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium. He's best known for his TV show, "Jack Hanna's Into the Wild," as well as his many appearances on "Good Morning America" and the "Late Show with David Letterman," accompanied over the years by a veritable menagerie of bears, tigers, skunks, lizards, primates big and small, and birds of all kinds, from penguins to ostriches.

He was born and raised on a farm in Tennessee, and refers to his Montana property as a farm, where they have chickens, cows and goats – but only in the summer. "Because we're not there year-round, we rent the animals. The grandkids love it. They pet the cows and play with the goats. Did you know you can rent 8 chickens for \$50 for the summer?"

Jack and his wife Suzi spend much of their year traveling the world, and much of Hanna's time is devoted to giving talks and advocating for wildlife and conservation. They have three children and several grandchildren, and enjoy gathering the whole family in Montana whenever possible.

MORE ONLINE

To read more about Jack and Suzi Hanna, go to jackhanna.com.



UPPER LEVEL



MAIN LEVEL



Built: 1996

Location:
Northwest
Montana

Square feet:
700

Bedrooms: 1, loft
Baths: 1



Photo by Roger Wade, courtesy Hearthstone

THE TIMELESS LOOK OF TIMBERS

A primer on timber home design & style BY CHARLES BEVIER

If you're drawn to the great timbers found in the soaring spaces of old bridges, barns and churches, then you may want to incorporate this type of building in your dream cabin.

Called "timber frame" or "post-and-beam," this form of construction offers an aesthetic appeal that can be achieved with no other building system. Soaring cathedral ceilings, the warmth and sturdiness of exposed timbers, and energy efficiency are combined with Old World craftsmanship.

The style itself is a timeless architectural form anchored in antiquity. However, the exposed posts and beams distinctly express 21st-century elegance. It's an intricate web of parts that both support and

beautify a cabin – every piece is as necessary to the structure as it is to the style.

"Timber-frame cabin owners are a little different," says Chris Wood of Hearthstone Homes in Dandridge, Tenn., which has been crafting these homes since 1971. "They want to leave their mark and pass down through the generations a cabin that's an expression of their creativity."

Brought to North America by European timberwrights in the 1700s, timber frames that went into many New England homes, churches, taverns and courthouses have life spans that are measured in centuries. It is a remarkable achievement considering the artisans who built these frames did so without nails, screws or power tools.

In the early 1900s, with the advent of steel and lumber mills, the skills that went into traditional timber framing were almost lost, recalls Tom Holmes, owner and founder of Glenville Timberwrights in Baraboo, Wis., which has been building timber-frame homes and cabins for 31 years.

He credits Tedd Benson's 1981 book "Building the Timber Frame House: The Revival of a Forgotten Art" for changing his life's path.

"When we first started, not many people understood what timber frames were," Holmes recalls. "But with a push for more open, airy spaces in homes, timber frames by their very nature are perfect for that interior application."



Photos courtesy Glenville Timber Wrights

How to talk timber

Today's timber cabins rarely come from the same mold. Designs run the gamut from traditional and classic to rustic or contemporary – and sometimes a mix of styles. It's this plethora of design options that can leave many newcomers to the industry bewildered, wandering through a forest of references to timbers, logs, posts and beams. Here's how to talk timber and describe what you want in your dream cabin.

The same difference: Traditional stick-built construction uses a skeleton of 2x4 or 2x6 studs hidden beneath drywall to frame the home. In engineering terms, this is a "distributed-load" structure. In contrast, timber-frame and post-and-beam cabins are "point-load" structures, where a few brawny horizontal and vertical beams carry all the weight of the roof and walls.

Timber frame: This construction

style is ages old, and evolved before the use of nails or screws. Carried on today, skilled craftspeople join timbers by mortise (wooden hole) and tenon (wooden tongue). The joints are typically drawn together with wood pegs. The frame "skeleton" of a cabin allows for open floor plans and cathedral ceilings.

Post and beam: While this type of construction results in the same kind of open floor plans as with timber framing, post-and-beam frames have metal fasteners between timbers instead of carved wooden joinery. These fasteners can include plates, screws and through-bolts.

A bit of both: If you're building in an environment prone to hurricanes, earthquakes or heavy snow and wind loads, local building codes may require steel-plate reinforcements. But your timber-frame producer can either hide these details behind trim or come up with color schemes that help them blend in.

What they aren't: Conventional builders may want to talk home buyers seeking a timber-frame look into using steel trusses and then boxing them in with wood millwork. Timberwrights dismiss this as "trimber framing."

Topped by trusses: Both post-and-beam and timber-frame cabins use timber trusses as focal points that draw attention upward. Trusses carry the weight of a second floor or roof system to the walls without any support from below (unless it's for decorative purposes only). Trusses and their individual components go by dozens of names and configurations (see sidebar for details).

Enclosing the frame

By far the most popular method for enclosing timber frames is structural insulated panels or SIPs. The panels consist of an insulating foam core sandwiched between two structural facings, typically



OPPOSITE: Timbers at the entry and side porch of this lakeside cabin hint at the framing inside. ABOVE LEFT: Posts can help define spaces in a cabin's interior; without the need for partition walls. ABOVE: A king post truss supports the roof of an entry porch. LEFT: A timber frame is raised and ready to be enclosed with exterior walls.



Photo courtesy Timberhaven Log Homes

oriented strand board (OSB).

SIPs are popular in timber-frame cabins because the panels can be quickly fastened to the frame and they offer unsurpassed energy efficiency, reducing heating and cooling costs by as much as 60% over stud-frame construction.

"It's a great way to maintain thermal efficiency and enclose the home quickly," explains Jeff Davis with Davis Frame Co. in Claremont, N.H., which specializes in hybrid designs. "It's also smart considering heating and cooling costs are on the rise."

Some post-and-beam producers enclose their cabins with panelized wall sections that are constructed in a facility and shipped to the site with windows and doors already in place. This system cuts down on waste and shaves time off construction.

How to buy and build

Timber-frame producers typically design and build your frame at their facility. They then disassemble the frame, transport it to your building site and erect it using a

crane, usually in a day or two. Some producers will also provide the enclosure system to create a weather-tight envelope and leave remaining construction to other contractors who finish the interior and exterior. Other producers provide full turnkey construction.

Some timber-home producers target a specific geographic market. Other producers offer their cabins nationwide or internationally through a network of authorized representatives who work with homebuyers in their local market.

By way of example, Timberhaven Log Homes in Lewisburg, Penn., provides everything to complete their post-and-beam homes from the sill seal to the roof system. "We try to make it as easy as possible for our builders and customers. The builder knows exactly what they are getting and it makes bidding a project that much easier," says Timberhaven's Lynda Tompkins.

Hybrid designs

More and more of today's timber cabins

Heavy timber posts and beams are fastened with metal plates outside this home. The main truss is echoed by timber braces above the second floor balcony roof.

combine conventional construction with timber-frame and log accents. Often called hybrid design, the homes typically have timbers in the public areas (great room, foyer, kitchen, dining area) and conventional stud framing or SIP construction in the remaining areas. Logs might be used on porches, decks or for exterior walls.

Going hybrid can help homeowners afford other upgrades in flooring, cabinetry or countertops, explains Bonnie Pickartz of Goshen Timber Frames in Franklin, N.C. "It's a matter of trade offs. With home costs rising, people are looking toward hybrids as a good mix of the reality of budget and the beauty of a timber frame," she says.

Time frame for timbers

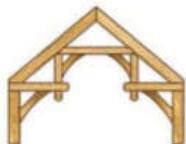
If you already have land for your dream cabin, then expect to spend three to five months on design and another six to nine months on construction, depending on the size of the home and a host of other variables, timber producers say.

timber terminology

BENTS: When trusses are joined to the vertical posts and horizontal beams, the assembly is called a bent. Bents are basically cross-sections of a timber frame.

HORIZONTAL BEAMS: These include timber sills (the perimeter of floor sections upon which posts stand), girts (which span between posts), joists (uses to support floors), purlins (used between exterior posts or to tie roof sections together) and ridgepole (the horizontal apex of the roof system).

TRUSSES: A triangle is the simplest form of truss (often used in small buildings). Adding a king post in the center of this triangle allows for a wider span. Queen post trusses, in contrast, look like a rectangle within the triangle. The hammerbeam is the most dramatic in appearance, used to span large interior spaces and is often featured in cathedrals.



HAMMERBEAM



KING POST
WITH STRUTS



QUEEN POST
(MODIFIED)



SCISSOR

VERTICAL POSTS: Serving as the legs of the timber frame, their names include principal posts (used at the corners) or king, queen, and crown posts – to name just a few. Each has a specific role to support other beams or trusses. For example, a samson post supports the intersection of four horizontal upper-story beams. A jowled post (also called a gunstock post) is fashioned from a whole tree turned upside down to utilize the natural flare of the trunk.

If you're still looking for land, then target sloped lots, Wood advises. "That way, you can have a walk-out basement and have the timber frame on the main level." Wood also advises building 12-foot sidewalls in your basement, to provide more volume on that level. "You can use 2 feet of that to run all your HVAC and plumbing, leaving a 10-foot ceiling space."

What about costs?

While it's nearly impossible to generalize costs nationwide, timber-frame or post-and-beam cabins are comparable in cost to other forms of custom construction. Put another way, custom construction is 15% to 20% more expensive than your local production or standard model cabin plan that offers few upgrades and no changes to a design.

"A common question is, 'How much do these homes cost per square foot,'" Wood says. "It's difficult to forecast until

you get through the design process. But an average cost would be around \$250 per square foot."

Other timber-home producers say finished cabins can cost as low as \$130 a square foot for modest amenities to \$400 or more per square foot for more luxurious appointments.

Hybrid designs can save buyers roughly \$10 to \$15 a square foot or 5% to 10% over a cabin that uses a full timber frame or post and beam throughout.

Rarely is the choice between going full frame or hybrid based solely on aesthetic or design considerations, Wood explains. "It usually comes down to cost. That's why we sell a lot of hybrid designs." CL

Charles is a recovering journalist who stumbled into the log and timber home industry and then spent more than two decades writing about them. So long, in fact, if he didn't live in a log or timber home, he'd lie and say he does.



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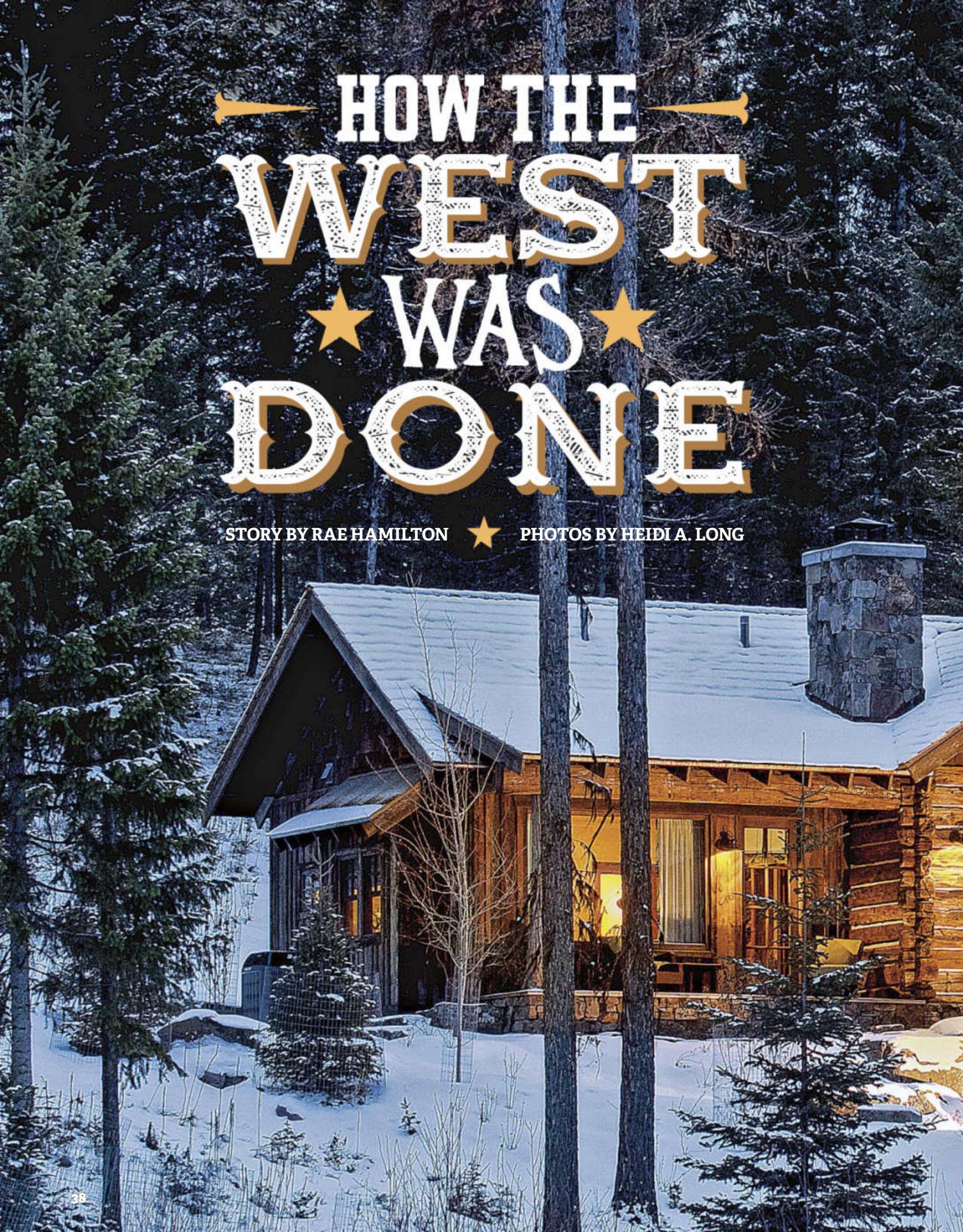
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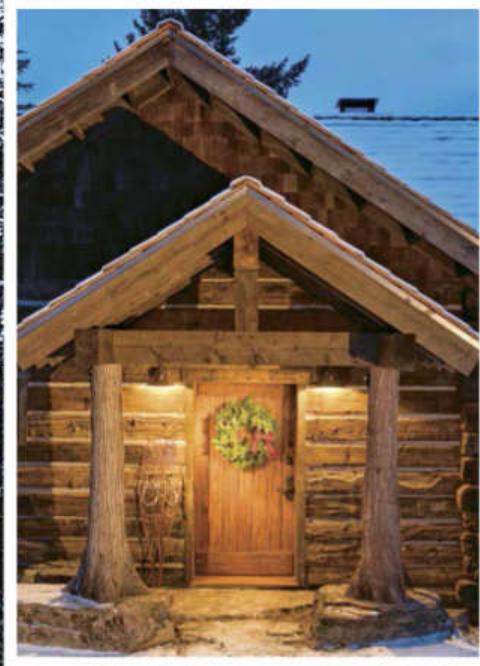
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HOW THE WEST ★ WAS ★ DONE

STORY BY RAE HAMILTON

PHOTOS BY HEIDI A. LONG



Jim and Lani Gifford nestled their cabin among the trees overlooking their lake to make it appear as if it had been there for ages. They didn't leave much to chance. "We probably planted more trees than we took down," says Jim. Local cedars support the roof over the entrance. They were harvested in the winter when there is little sap in the logs. A large steel knife set in each log's concrete base goes through the boulder and into the log to help it withstand seismic shocks.



ABOVE: Ranch manager Jim Boyd and his dog, Zip, haul in a Christmas tree for the great room. (A 10-foot-plus span of windows serves as a great focal point for such a decoration.)

RIGHT: Century-plus-old logs were reclaimed from the Stimson Dam for the cabin. The Giffords and the builder decided the logs made such a dramatic statement that the corners should not be dove-tailed, as originally planned, but saddle-notched.







Reclaimed materials permeate the kitchen and dining area. The dining set comprises a restored Virginia farm table and new chairs. The floors were made from corral planks taken from eastern Montana, which is much more arid than the western part of the state and, therefore, kinder to old wood.



Miami native Jim Gifford, his wife, Lani, and their three young children first visited Montana in 2000, not knowing that the trip would soon change their lives.

"I had the stereotypical view of the West gained from watching television and going to the movies," Jim says. "Montana was a revelation. It opened our eyes to another world. And eventually it made me want to provide my family with an alternative to bright and shiny city life, shopping malls and video games."

The Giffords bought a parcel of land with a private lake and a view of Holland Peak, the highest point in the Swan Mountain Range. When Jim and Lani considered where to site the cabin, they gave a great deal of thought not only to the lay of the land but to how the cabin would fit in with the rich tradition in that part of Montana.

"I have a deep appreciation of history," says Jim. "I wanted our cabin to blend in with the history of this region – to look, in fact, like it had been here 100 years."

Jim selected Bigfork, Montana-based Bigfork Builders to build his dream cabin. "The people at Bigfork understood my tastes, as did all the professionals working on the project," he notes. "We were lucky to be working with a crew that loved what they did and did what they loved very well."

Brad Reedstrom, one of the founders of Bigfork Builders, figured the best way to comply with the Giffords' wishes would be to actually work with 100-year-old wood. He turned to Wild Wood Eccentrics' proprietor JL Halverstadt for help. Halverstadt found logs recovered from the Stimson Dam, built in 1886 on the Blackfoot River of "A River Runs Through It" fame.

"The dam was an all-wood dam, attached with wrought-iron pins – a

rarity," says Halverstadt, a former logger. "Most of the wood is ponderosa pine. It has ferris staining, giving it a spectacular bluish-black tone. Knots stick up from the wood a whole inch or an inch-and-a-quarter."

"The raised grain screamed 'really old,'" states the builder. "Our original plan was to dovetail the logs at the corners, but we decided it would be a disservice to the wood. We saddle-notched the corners and left the ends exposed." The interior of the house also comprises natural or reclaimed materials, such as surface stones, barn wood and corral planks.

The use of such local materials factored well into the cabin's Gold-Level certification under the National Association of Home Builders' (NAHB) Green Building Standard program. "Our approach was fairly straightforward," the builder explains. "We wanted a tight building. We put 2 inches of foam on the inside of the logs and fastened the interior walls to the logs through the foam. It's an energy-efficient structure, trapping cool air in the summer and warm air in the winter."

The Giffords use their cabin chiefly during the warmer months. "We do a lot of entertaining in the summer," says Lani. "Our friends and family love it. They can do things they've never done before. We regularly celebrate July the Fourth at the cabin. We hike, ride horseback and swim in the lake. As we tell our friends, Montana is not a place to see – it's a place to do."

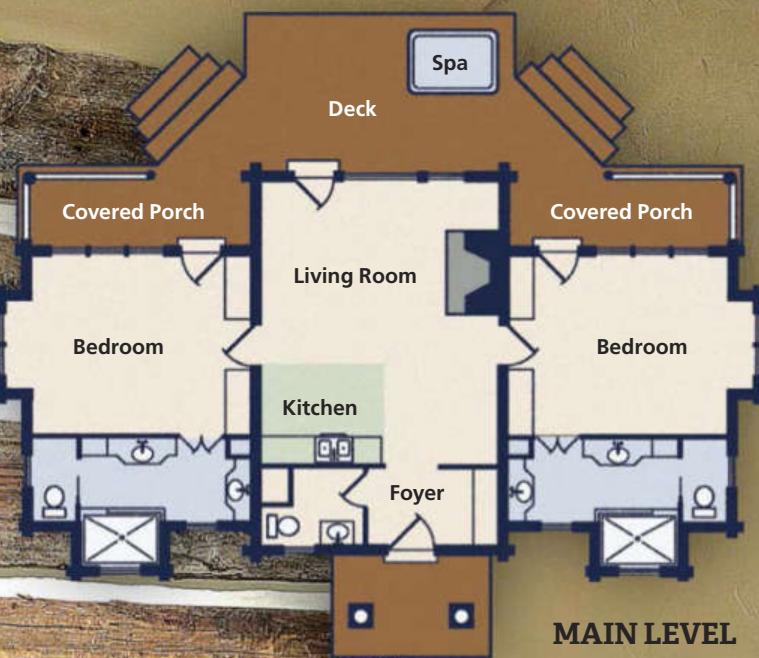
Christmases provide an opportunity to partake in some less-frequent activities for the family. "That's a different experience for Floridians," says Jim. "Items on the to-do list in the winter include skiing, snowmobiling and snowshoe hiking." Not to mention gazing at the snow-covered, isolated splendor of ancient Holland Peak from the warmth of their not-so-new cabin. **CL**



OPPOSITE: This daybed in the great room is from Old Hickory Tannery, ohtfurniture.com.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ■ The white pedestal sink contrasts rustic, reclaimed material. ■ Complementary stone and wood bring nature in. ■ Hooks in the entryway help keep things organized. ■ Wintertime at the Giffords' cabin is playtime – for everyone. ■ Would a Montana cabin Christmas tree be complete without a cowgirl ornament? ■ Small glass tiles in this backsplash bring a contemporary touch, while still being a natural material. ■ The columns at the entrance help ensure that the cabin blends into the surrounding forest.





CABIN STATS

Built: Early 2000

Location: Western Montana

Square feet: 1,480

Bedrooms: 2

Baths: 2.5



design ideas

RUSTIC STYLE

It's only natural

APPEALING PEELS. In a rustic home in Montana's Yellowstone Club, great slabs of rock serve as stairs that wrap around a rugged fireplace. Overhead, skip-peeled log beams highlight the contrasting colors of the logs' layers. Branchy stair railings add to the woodsy charm, which is reinforced by distressed barnwood paneling applied vertically to the exterior wall.

Architect/builder: Faure-Halvorsen Architects,
faurehalvorsen.com/Teton Heritage Builders,
tetonheritagebuilders.com



ADD LIFE TO YOUR CABIN WITH ORGANIC TOUCHES

BY JANICE BREWSTER

If a love of the outdoors inspires you to build a cabin, why not let Mother Nature be your decorator, too? Bring natural elements in all their imperfect glory

Photo by Karl Neumann

into your cabin, and you'll add warmth and authenticity to your surroundings. The gentle curves of organic materials can soften the hard edges of manufactured finishes and make

a cabin truly unique. As you design or decorate your cabin, consider adding logs, branches, twigs, stone – even antlers – to the mix, and watch your home's personality blossom.



POSTED (left). Glossy stone flooring conveys a natural look in the lower-level recreation room of this home, where naturally flared log posts provide a forest feel. The posts are peeled to reveal the wood's rich color. Stone accents the walls and bar, and the natural log shape is echoed in the base of the pool table.

Designer/architect:
Anna Laird/Destree
Design Architects,
destreearchitects.com

Photos by Scott Amundson Photography



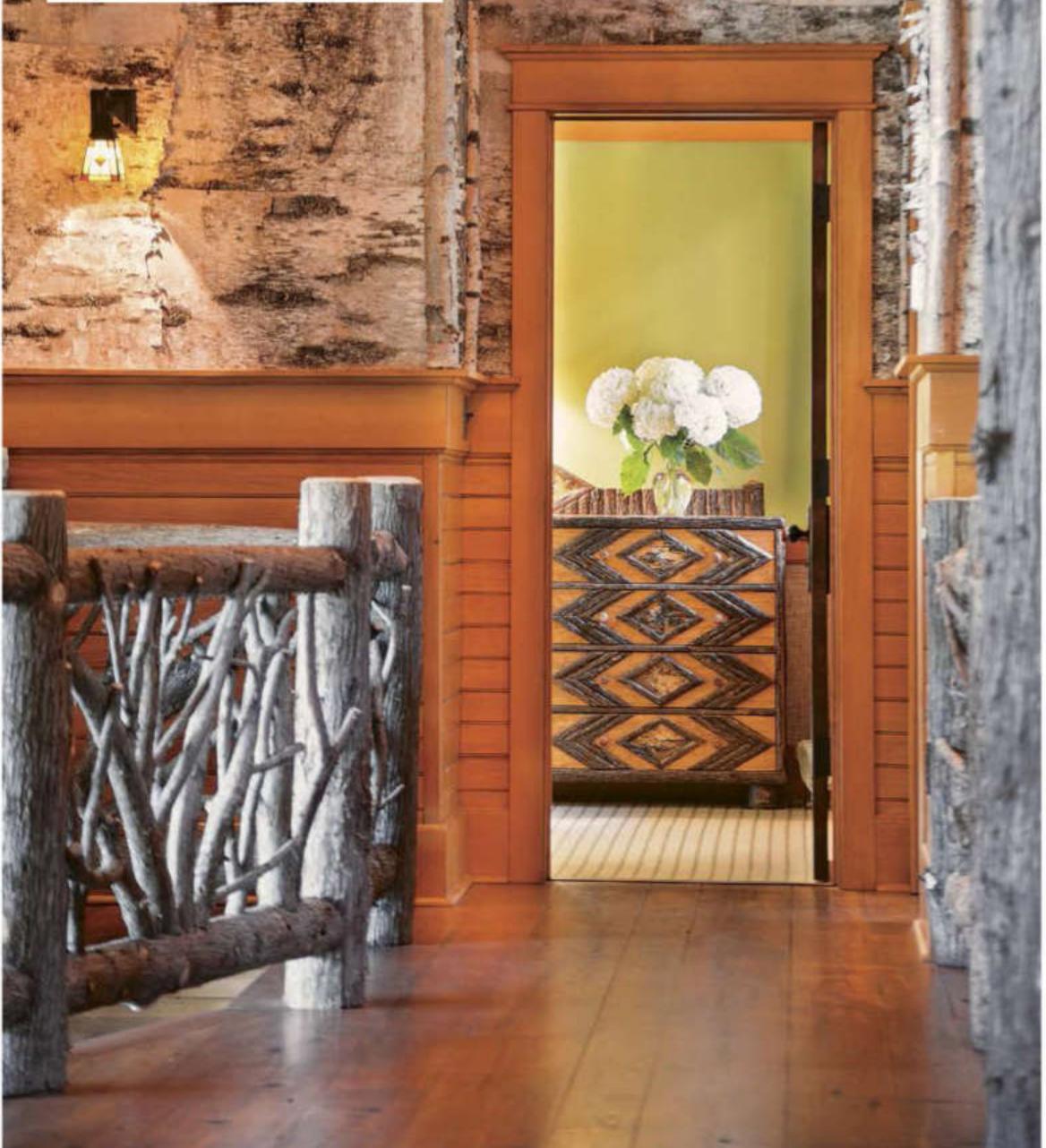
Left: Photo courtesy Design Works Development; Right: By Troy Bell

INTO THE WOODS
(right). Flared Western red cedar trees with their bark intact frame a fixed pane of glass to invite the outdoors right into this Keystone, Colo., home. A low stone wall keeps the view unobstructed while adding another measure of texture to this scene overlooking the Snake River.

Architect: Design Works Development, designworksdevelopment.com

PORCH ROCKER (above). A home on New Hampshire's Lake Winnipesaukee was designed to take full advantage of its site and be energy-efficient to save natural resources. A large boulder brought in from nearby serves as a post base – defining right at the front door that this is an earth-friendly home. A wood pergola on full-log posts contrasts with the crisp colors of the home and garage.

Architect: Whitten Architects, whittenarchitects.com



Right & inset: Photos by Tom Stock Studios

FOREST FINDS. Natural touches abound on the stair landing of this Adirondack-style home and blend smooth textures with rough. Birch bark lines the walls above wood wainscoting. Branches act as stair railings and mica with the imprint of ferns accents the pendant light fixtures. A dresser decorated with intricate twig work is seen through the bedroom door.

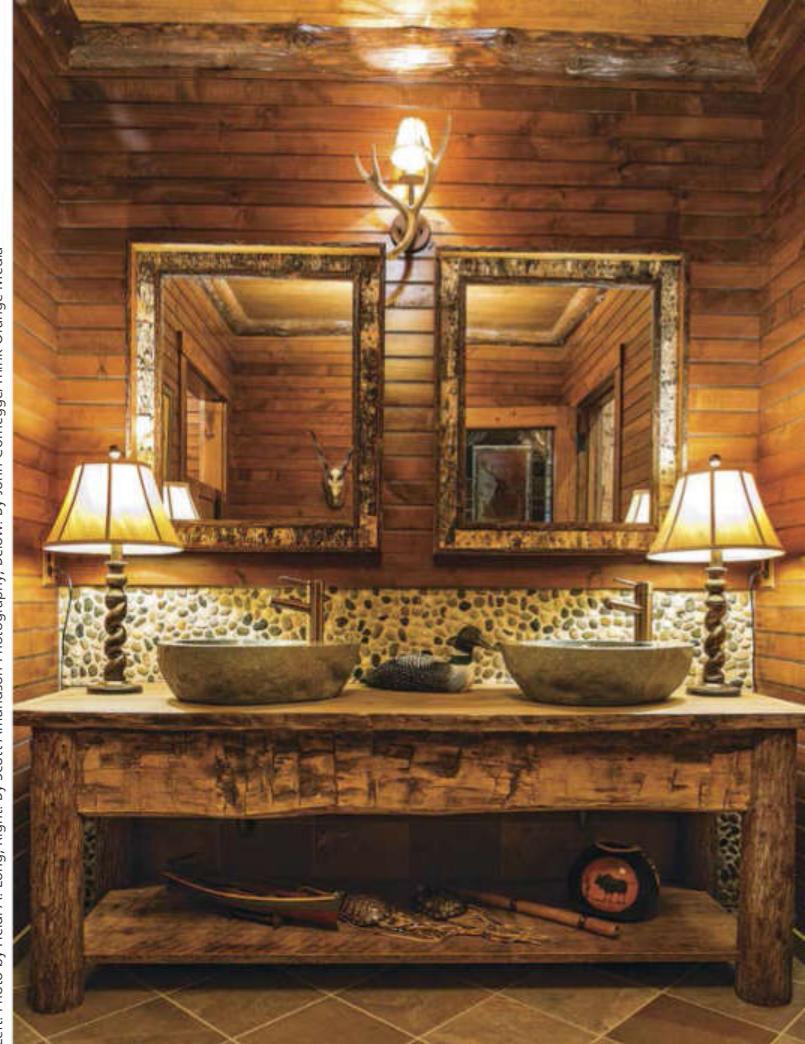
BRANCHING OUT

(inset). Stone floors ground the entry to this rustic but elegant upstate New York home, while the stairway echoes the woods outdoors. Instead of traditional balusters, branches weave together to form eye-catching railings in authentic Adirondack style. Logs with their bark intact outline the space as stout posts and beams.

Design/builder:
Elizabeth Guest
Interiors LLC,
[elizabethguest
interiors.com](http://elizabethguestinteriors.com)



Left: Photo by Heidi A. Long; Right: By Scott Amundson Photography; Below: By John Cornege/Think Orange Media



MATTERS OF THE HEARTH (above, left). Flanking a field-stone fireplace, papery white birch branches contrast with the honey tones of the wood walls and give this seating area the feel of a peaceful forest glade. Natural materials extend to the furniture, with a pair of chairs and a footstool crafted from bent willow branches.

Designer: Indeed Décor, indeeddecor.com



DABBLE IN PEBBLES (left). Pebble tile under the claw-foot tub and on the floor of the shower brings natural texture to this sleek master bath in Calgary, British Columbia. Wide wood trim around the corner windows frames a forest view and adds another natural tone to the neutral space. The floor tile is designed to mimic wood grain.

Designer: Chinnick & Co., chinnick.ca

PUT TOGETHER (above). A mix of natural materials creates a beautiful vanity area in this bath. Organic stone vessel sinks sit atop a rugged wood table. Pebble tiles complement the stone table lamps. Above the backsplash, birch bark frames the mirrors and an antler light fixture casts a warm glow. **cl**

Designer: Marie Meko, Allied ASID, Gabberts Design Studio, gabberts.com.

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Runamuk Roost

Winter wonderland: Draped in snow, this weekend getaway is warm and inviting. The new front porch sports a gabled roof with post-and-lintel supports. Arched brackets below the lintel mimic the arch-top door.

A Wisconsin retreat is seamlessly expanded & updated

STORY & PHOTOS BY STEVE UMLAND



Warm wood tones line the walls, floor and ceiling in the original living room. Front windows offer a view of the lake. The locally quarried stone fireplace and ample seating create a cozy setting where the family can spend quality time. Jim's old piano has an important place in this room.

Runamuk Roost is truly a special place. This northwoods gem is tucked away in the heart of unspoiled forests in northern Wisconsin's Sawyer County. Drive down its curved driveway and shed the burdens of a long workweek. Cabin owners Jim and Joan spend time fishing and boating on Durphee Lake, or just sitting on the cabin's back deck enjoying the fire pit and spectacular sunsets across the lake.

Knowing I like log construction, a close friend introduced me to Jim and Joan and their Runamuk Roost, which happens to be within a few miles of my own log cabin.

History

Jim and Joan's place was built in the mid-1960s by Dale Scidmore, a carpenter from nearby Stone Lake, Wis. The cabin was built with solid handcrafted logs, while the stone for the foundation and fireplace came from a local quarry located just a few miles from the property. The wood floors were reclaimed from a factory in Boston and date back 150 years. They were laid in the 19-century manner by local craftsmen.

Like most cabins of its era, the original cabin was small, consisting of a nice cozy living room that flowed into a small kitchen, two small bedrooms, and a tiny bathroom.

Fast forward to 1996. Jim's parents, Don and Sue, who had owned numerous North Woods properties, owned a cabin on Sawyer County's Lac Courte Oreilles. They eventually grew weary of the crowds and noise on the big lake, so they started driving around in the afternoons and lucked upon Runamuk, which didn't even have a For Sale sign at the time. They saw the cabin's charm, fell in love with the location, and made an offer to buy Runamuk Roost. Offer accepted.

Not long after, Don and Sue added onto the cabin. The renovation consisted of adding a master bedroom and bathroom, updating the original very small

BELOW: An interior window separating the breakfast nook from the entry allows plenty of light to filter inside.

RIGHT: The new light-filled galley-style kitchen invites a crowd, with seating at both the island and the nearby breakfast nook. The kitchen flows easily to the original living room and to the added-on three-season porch.



bathroom, and expanding the living space on the cabin's north side adjacent to the original fireplace.

Determined not to change the original feel of their dream cabin, Don and Sue worked diligently to ensure that the addition would blend seamlessly with the handcrafted log cabin's original construction and features.

In the end, the heritage and charm that they fell in love with when they bought the place was maintained, and their family started creating memories at the lake. Don and Sue accomplished their goal in spades. Little did they know they were establishing a blueprint of things to come.

Round two

In 2000, Don and Sue sold the cabin to Jim and Joan. Seven years later, the new owners realized their family was out-

growing the 1,000-square-foot addition that was done in 1996.

Many cabin owners reach this point when they've outgrown their cabin and ponder: Renovate or rebuild? It is often easier, and certainly cheaper, in today's world to scrape and build new. Joan and Jim would never have considered the easier route. So in 2008, it was time to expand the cabin again with the hope that the new addition would carry on the legacy of preserving heritage and charm that was set by Don and Sue.

Joan shared a vision with Jim that they could enlarge the footprint without ruining the trees and yard and build more up than out. Jim was skeptical, even though he knew Joan was talented at such things. As a result, the couple consulted an architect, Gary Nelson of Nelson Lumber in Hayward, Wis., who demonstrated Joan's vision was feasible using numerous



MORE ONLINE

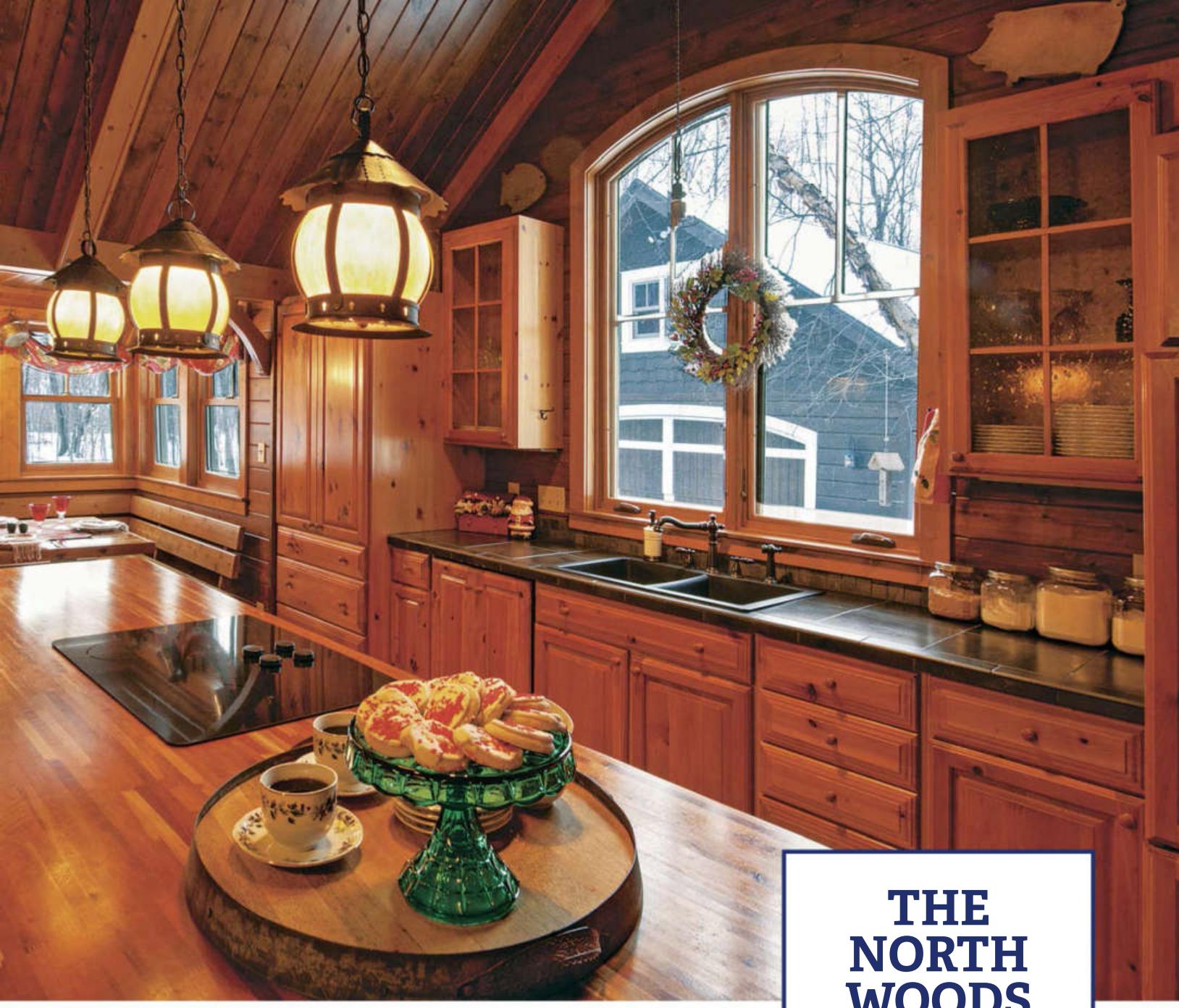
For more photos of this Cabin Tour, go to: cabinlivingmag.com/dream-cabins/renovation/runamuk-roost

drawings. At this point, Jim bought in.

The couple searched out locally harvested lumber closely matching the original structure's look and feel. Local craftsman were used who had the knowledge and experience to pull off what they knew was a labor of love. They matched the original woodwork's stains and varnish. Scrape it and start over? That was never an option!

New layout

The renovation called for remaking the front of the cabin. Initially, you walk through the new front door and enter the



foyer. Turn left and you'll find the new kitchen area or turn right and climb the new stairway.

The new modern kitchen has ample seating: A beautiful breakfast nook with built-in benches is tucked beside the front entryway, and a center island has barstool seating overlooking the cooktop.

The stairway leads to a TV landing where a built-in cabinet is filled with games for kids of all ages. At the top of the stairs, you turn to the right and find two new bedrooms, both with views of the great outdoors.

The new bedroom overlooking the

lake is set apart from the rest of the cabin. It has an airy French Country feel with built-in wardrobes, a bench under the picture window, and a light whitewash on the walls.

Between the two bedrooms is a new, third bathroom. It includes a very modern cabin convenience: a stacked washer and dryer.

Where old meets new

A remarkable fact about the multiple renovations to Runamuk Roost: You can't tell where old meets new, despite the add-ons. It took master-level craftsmanship to

THE NORTH WOODS

SAWYER COUNTY IS prime cabin country with 300,000 acres of forest including the Chequamegon National Forest, plus numerous lakes and rivers. Durphee Lake is a quaint 198-acre lake with excellent fishing and spectacular sunsets tucked between two larger lakes. The area has all the amenities: resorts, restaurants, shopping, and beautiful unspoiled woods. Little has changed on this lake in the last 50 years.



White-washed walls and ceiling beams in one of the new second-floor bedrooms wraps the room in old-fashioned charm.

marry new handcrafted logs to old in seamless fashion. Not an easy project at all.

And then there's the interior. After I was told about Runamuk Roost's history of additions, I was intrigued and looked throughout the interior structure to find the original footprint. Try as I might, I couldn't detect the corners where the footprint was altered. I couldn't find ceiling marks, often the easiest place to spot nail holes or discolored wood, where old met new. This is simply the best added-on design and renovation I have ever seen.

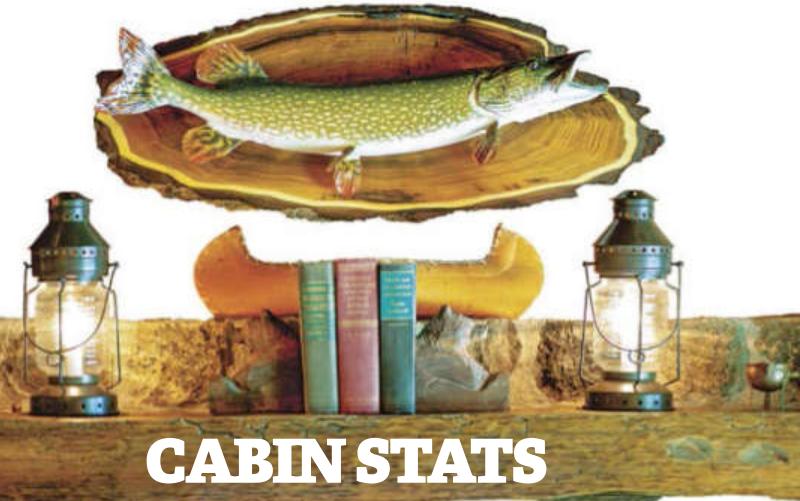
Joan, who has always had a passion for interior design, created a charming northwoods cottage out of an old-heritage dark cabin. Antiques, like the 1905 piano purchased from the Catholic school Jim attended, and animal mounts with personal family stories attached, add layers of history and charm to this carefully crafted masterpiece. Jim likes to share that he actually learned to play on that very piano. A favorite item is the moose leg lamp made from a moose shot by Jim's father.

Hats off to these cabin owners

It's so refreshing to find a family that wants to think outside the box: to renovate instead of rebuild; to see potential for adding what they need to a cabin, without losing the charm; to see past the numbers on a ledger and know that family heritage comes first.

I challenge anyone, even a contractor or architect, to walk through Runamuk Roost and pick out exactly where it was added onto, and what went where – back in the day. **CL**

Steve Umland, a self-diagnosed “building nut” obsessed with anything log or wood related, lives in a full log home he designed and built himself on Lac Courte Oreilles in Sawyer County, Wis.



CABIN STATS

Built: Mid-1960s

Renovated: 1996 & 2008

Location:

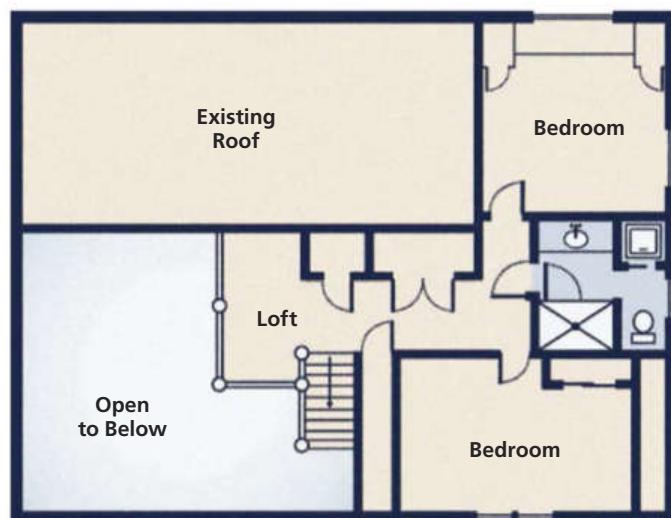
Durphée Lake, Wis.

Square feet:

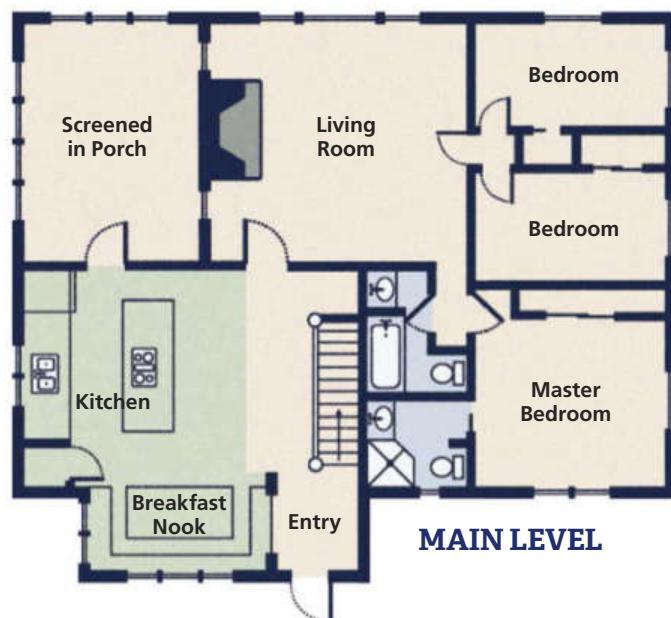
2,000

Bedrooms: 5

Baths: 3



UPPER LEVEL



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PASSING DOWN THE FAMILY CABIN



A little financial planning goes a long way toward preserving a lifetime of memories

STORY BY SALLY A. KANE, ESQ.

Your cabin is more than a piece of property, it is a place where memories are made. Wherever your cabin is located, it is a place to treasure the days of swimming, fishing, hiking, skiing, or just wiling away an afternoon. These moments spent with family and friends will be recounted time and time again at the family dinner table, a tradition your children, grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren will continue in the future.

Preserving your cabin for future generations requires forethought and planning. While the cabin allows you to forget about such everyday matters as taxes, mortgages, and future repairs, these are exactly the factors you should address so that your cabin can remain part of your family in the years to come.

The high costs of cabin ownership

Your investment in your cabin returns untold personal rewards. The lifetime of memories you earn is worth every dime you invest in buying and maintaining your vacation home. No doubt your children feel the same way.

However, good intentions and deep love for the cabin will not pay the bank, the IRS, the insurance agent, and the contractor when the roof begins to leak. While forming your estate plan, be mindful of the financial obligations associated with owning the cabin. You can defray these costs through careful planning so your kids never have to worry whether they can afford the place.

Forms of real property ownership

In your heart, the family cabin belongs to your entire family. However, only the deed-holders are the true legal owners and the form of ownership affects their rights to the property.

› TENANTS BY THE ENTIRETY

Married couples typically hold real property as tenants by the entirety. Under this

type of deed, you and your spouse are equal owners of your cabin so when one of you dies, the other will own the property. Many couples do not consider that the surviving spouse may remarry down the road. If the surviving spouse then dies or divorces, the future spouse may have a right to the cabin.

› JOINT TENANTS WITH RIGHT OF SURVIVORSHIP

As joint tenants with right of survivorship, two or more people have an undivided, 100% interest in the property. When one owner dies, the other owners absorb the decedent's interests. If you were to deed the property to two siblings as joint tenants, for example, the sibling to die first could not bequeath the cabin to her or his family, but instead the surviving sibling would acquire sole ownership. The cabin would pass down one line, instead of to your grandchildren and great-grandchildren as you might intend.

› TENANTS IN COMMON

Tenants in common own individual shares in the property, which may be of unequal size and can be transferred to third parties through sale or inheritance. The percentage owned by one child could be subject to a creditor's lien if the child acquires a large debt, a circumstance that could put the property in jeopardy. Your child's spouse could also lay claim to your child's share of the cabin should she or he divorce.

Benefits of putting your cabin & finances into trust

A living trust – often referred to as an inter vivos trust – is an estate planning instrument that allows you to control the use, transfer, ownership, and funding of your cabin during your lifetime and upon your death. The trust, not you or your children, owns the cabin.

The trustee manages the trust's assets on behalf of the beneficiaries. You may act as both trustee and beneficiary. When you die, the remainder of the trust passes

to the family members you named as beneficiaries to be managed by the person you named as trustee. This arrangement offers several advantages for you and your family, as outlined below.

› PROTECTING YOUR CABIN FROM CREDITORS

Because the trust owns the cabin rather than you, your creditors cannot attach liens to the property. At the time of your death, the cabin would not be considered part of your estate and would therefore not be subject to estate tax rules. Likewise, your kids never own the property either, and can therefore avoid the risk of creditors' liens in the future.

› PAYING EXPENSES

Your children may not be able to afford the mortgage payments, taxes, property insurance and upkeep on the cabin. Without financial resources, they might one day face the heartbreaking decision to sell the home they cherish. By depositing money into a trust, you can ensure that funds are available to cover the high costs of homeownership.

› KEEPING THE PEACE

When multiple families are involved, they might not agree with one another on the amount of maintenance and upgrades needed on the property and the division of responsibilities. Leaving these tough decisions to your children can place an unnecessary strain on their relationship. The trust account takes the money out of the equation so your children can enjoy the cabin without calculating who owes what.

› REDUCING TAXES

Some types of trusts offer substantial income tax benefits. Money the trust earns on investments belongs to the trust, not to you personally, and so may not be considered income. Your financial advisor or lawyer can counsel you on the appropriate trust formation that meets your estate planning and taxation goals.

Paying off your mortgage

A spouse or children who are not on your mortgage cannot automatically take over payments. Upon your death, the bank expects full payment if you are the only borrower. Do not assume that refinancing is an option for your family. Lending requirements have become very strict. Banks insist that the borrower make a steady income, which may be problematic for a retiree, regardless of her or his level of financial security. Your kids' credit may be affected by student loans or mortgages on their primary residences.

Ideally, owning the cabin outright relieves your family of refinancing concerns. However, paying off the mortgage may not be the right option for you, especially if it would mean transferring funds from other stable or lucrative investments, such as your IRA or a stock portfolio earning higher returns than the interest you are accruing on your mortgage. Even if your estate is able to pay off the mortgage, your surviving spouse could be placed in the position of choosing between the cabin and other treasured assets or crucial income sources.

One solution is to take out a life insurance policy in the amount of your remaining mortgage. The beneficiary can pay off the mortgage with the proceeds and the money is often tax-free.

Your next step

Because these matters are complex, it is important to retain a lawyer with knowledge about the estate laws of the state where you live and state in which the cabin is located. No matter how healthy and young you are, it is never too soon to start planning for the future. With a well-considered estate plan in place, you can confidently imagine your great-great-grandchildren's dinner conversation about how much fun they had at the cabin. **cl**

Longtime contributor Sally Kane is an attorney, consultant, writer and cabin enthusiast based in Pittsburgh, Pa.

make winter fun!

12 ideas for turning the stay-inside season into your best season at the cabin.

BY LUCIE B. AMUNDSEN



2

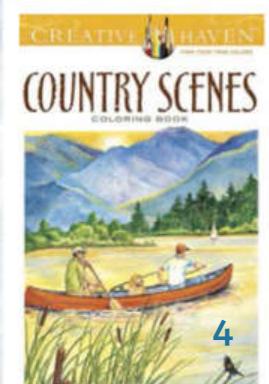
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3



4



5

The summer season is never long enough, so why not turn the off-season ON? The key to embracing winter at your cabin is having as many favorite activities for January as you do for July. And just like fun doings on sunshiny days, it all takes a bit of advanced planning.

1. Photo courtesy Rome Industries; 2. by fotolia.com/Vyacheslav Iakobchuk; 3. By staff; 4. Courtesy Dover Publications; 5. By staff

ACTIVITY LEVEL

mellow

Let's start with the simplest to do.

1 Take advantage of two of winter's attributes, darkness and chilly weather, and enjoy a fire. Either in an outdoor fire pit or flames in your wood stove, cooking becomes an adventure when using a pie iron, sandwich cooker, or pudgy pie maker. The possibilities of sweet and savory treats that come out of a pie iron are nearly endless. The most basic ingredients would be two slices of bread buttered on the outsides, then filled with your choice of jam or cheese and meat. But you can use anything from croissants with curry to biscuit mix and pie filling. Assemble your meal on one side, close the cooker and hold over the campfire for a few minutes, flip, and you've got our own DIY turnover or pastry.

2 Try a read-aloud book session at the cabin starting with "The Long Winter," part of the "Little House on the Prairie" series. It will make everyone, young and old, appreciate the warm cabin as one reads about the great snows of 1880–1881. These blizzards cut off a small South Dakota town from any supplies for months. The entire population's fate wrested with two young men who left the settlement for the open prairie in search of a mysterious wheat cache.

3 Another culinary project with a big payoff begins with warming real maple syrup in a saucepan. When your candy thermometer reaches 235°, pour it over fresh, clean snow, and you've made a traditional maple taffy treat. Eat it fast before it turns back into syrup. I recommend using Grade B syrup as it's much darker than Grade A Medium Amber, a little thicker, and lends a stronger flavor for this memory-making dessert. (Grade B can be pricey; feel free to substitute Grade A Dark Amber.)

4 The quiet cabin may be the perfect location to get in on the latest relaxation trend: adult coloring books. Yes, seriously! With hundreds of books featuring everything from patterns such as paisleys and decorative scrollwork to animals for color embellishment, there's respite for everyone's over-stimulated mind. So, channel your inner Van Gogh, choose a topic you enjoy, and color up a storm inside the comfort of your cabin.

5 Of course, winter doesn't mean the end of grilling season. All the same recipes you use in the summer are fair game for chilly nights. Allow more time for the grill to heat up and once your dinner is inside, resist the urge to open the cover. And because the sun sets earlier, a grill-side lamp or headlamp may be in order for the grill master.

6 Adults may enjoy reading essays to one another, and it's an activity they can surely finish and still have time to discuss before the fire dies down. The New York Times offers short and often hilarious pieces from their weekly "Great Lives" column from the Sunday magazine. See topics.nytimes.com/top/features/magazine/columns/lives/index.html

there's MORE!

Turn to page 65 for
a grilling recipe for
Pineapple-Glazed
Ham.

Photos courtesy Carol M. Johnson



7



7

As explained in idea #7 below, snow forts are a fun family activity. The snow fort shown above was actually a quinzee hut or snow cave built by experienced outdoors-woman Carol Johnson with help from her sons Loren (purple jacket) and Cole. A quinzee hut is a simple shelter made by hollowing out a big pile of snow.

 BONUS: Find many snow fort ideas and plans at pinterest.com/cabin_living.

ACTIVITY LEVEL

moderate

Now that you're all warm and cozy, it's time to go outdoors. Once you have your gear figured out (see sidebar, next page), the biggest hurdle to getting outside is a mental one. Often the thought of being cold and uncomfortable far exceeds the reality. And like getting into a cold lake or river, there's no other way than to plunge right in! It will bring more meaning to your season and according to some studies, enrich your mental and physical health, too.

7 If your cabin is in snow country, building a snow fort is a great group activity. Snow forts are not just for kids (and adult supervision adds safety anyway). When illuminated from within using low-powered LED lights, a fort can make a magical seasonal display to enjoy all winter long. Start by mapping out your structure using a stick to draw in the snow. From there, you can make snow bricks with plastic containers, coolers, or bread pans. Like real masons, be sure to stagger your bricks over each other as you move up the wall for additional strength. Pouring water down the sides of your structure will ice it over for lasting power.

8 Although the trails may not display leaves or wild flowers this time of year, hiking is a four-season sport. One advantage to diving into the winter woods is the windbreak. Stepping off an exposed field or lake and into the sheltering trees can turn a 20-degree day into an occasion to take off your scarf and gloves. But to experience that kind of warmth, you must be trekking at a good clip. Slip on a pair of traction cleats – like Yaktrax for moderate terrain or Kahtoola Microspikes for a more aggressive trail of packed snow or ice – and you can confidently move at a warming pace.

9 However, if you've experienced significant snow accumulation, you may need to distribute your weight with snowshoes to keep from breaking through. Considering the only skill needed to snowshoe is walking, it's a great activity for the whole family. It burns up to 45% more calories than walking, so is health-

ful on many levels.

The extra effort you invest by getting out in winter is often rewarded with quiet, uncrowded trails. Snow also showcases critter tracks, as well as other evidence of wildlife. And if you enjoy hiking in the height of summer, the sparse look of winter scenery can offer a lovely contrast.



ACTIVITY LEVEL

extreme



10 For the more adventuresome with a canine companion, skijoring may just be the excitement your winter needs. An import from Norway, this sport is no more than a person on skis being pulled by a dog.

It requires a belt with leg holes for the skier, akin to a climber's harness, outfitted with some quick-release levers for safety. This attaches to a shock-absorbing line, approximately 8 feet long, then hitches to your dog's special harness. Skiers employ either a traditional cross-country stride or a side-to-side ski skate technique. Full kits start at under \$200.00. Resources include thedogoutdoors.com.

Dogs must be well trained in basic commands for starting, left and right turns and of course, stopping – all best learned on foot before going out on the trails. While there are many resources – online, videos, books – finding a skijoring demonstration or club would be the best way to enter this exciting sport.

11 And for those looking for air, kite skiing is a relatively new sport done on ice or snow. It requires skis and a harness like skijoring, but the pull comes from a wind-harnessing kite. The kites are smaller versions of those used in paragliding.

Check with local colleges or recreation clubs for kite skiing clinics. With kites starting at \$1,200, you may want to be sure you have the right wind conditions in your area before you invest.

12 For more ideas and inspiration for winter fun, go to CabinLivingMag.com and use "search" to find articles like "Sailing on Ice," "A Cabin Christmas Past," "A D-icy Adventure," Old-Fashioned Christmas Sugar Cookies" and "Nature Memory Ornaments." **CL**

A native Mainer who now lives in northern Minnesota, Lucie Amundsen knows winter. Read her story "One Family's Backcountry Misadventures" at CabinLivingMag.com.



gearing up

AS EXPLORER SIR RANULPH FIENNES is

often quoted, "There's no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing."

The proper gear can make your outdoor winter adventures far more successful and pleasurable. Try these tips:

- Invest in a loose-fitting wicking layer for your upper body, as well as long johns. The extra room will trap insulating pockets of air to keep you warmer, and unlike cotton, the material will wick sweat away from your body. Follow that with a fleece layer, top with a jacket that breaks the wind, and you're nearly outdoor ready.



- Cold hands can limit outdoor fun so bring a couple pairs of gloves (put the spare in a pocket against your body – when the first pair gets wet, you'll be happy to put on warm, dry ones). For comfortable toes, look for socks made with some merino wool.

They'll keep their insulating value even when damp.

- And there's no shame in using hand and feet warmers to keep your outdoor edge! Either the homemade variety (a small microwavable sack of rice) or the disposable kind available in bulk from warehouse stores or online, these little pocket furnaces, tucked in ski boots or under a hat, are a cheap way to get more fun out of your winter.

- A pair of trail-breaking cross-country skis can also curtail the winter doldrums, but before you plunge into an equipment investment multiplied by the size of your family, give it a try first. Rent snowshoes or cross-country skis for a weekend from retailers like REI or a local ski shop. Many colleges also have rental programs and often low-cost lessons to engage the community in outdoor recreation – because that's where the fun is.



Jacket: Ortovox; socks: CEP Compression; Gloves: Arcteryx; Snow spikes: Kahtoola NANOSpikes

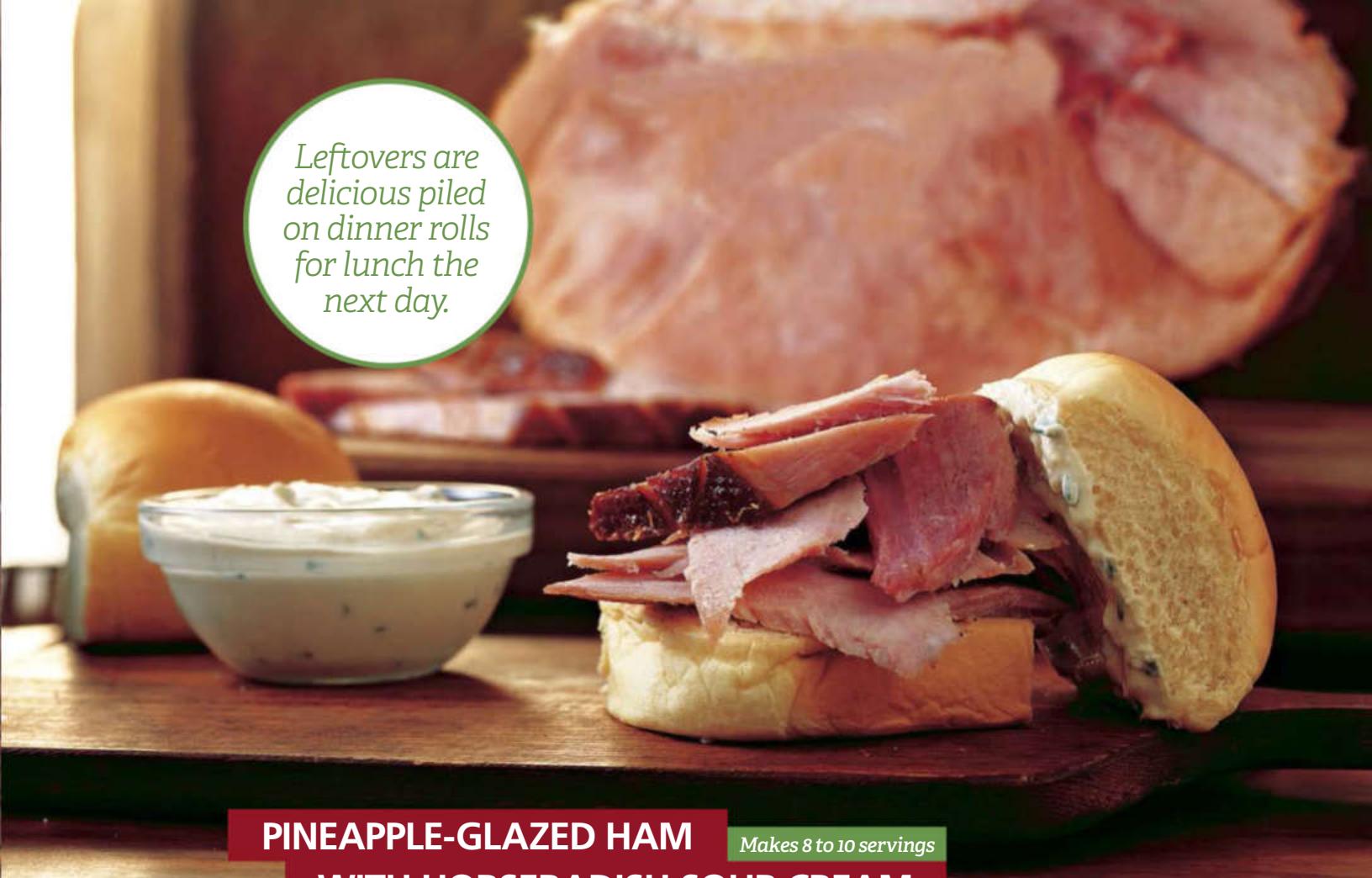


For many families, holiday time is cabin time. It's an opportunity to gather with our favorite people in our favorite place, and renew the traditions that bind us together. But, whether those traditions include a snowy trek for the perfect tree or an annual pajama-clad screening of "It's a Wonderful Life," the ones most imbedded in the fabric of our cabin holiday memories seem to revolve around food. A creamy cup of eggnog, a buttery cookie, homemade cinnamon buns – each is longed for all year, and lovingly savored at holiday time.

Text continues on page 67

HOORAY FOR HOLIDAYS AT THE CABIN!

Make it fancy without fussing **BY LISA READIE MAYER**



Leftovers are delicious piled on dinner rolls for lunch the next day.

PINEAPPLE-GLAZED HAM WITH HORSERADISH SOUR CREAM

Makes 8 to 10 servings

Avoid using a presliced ham for this recipe; it might dry out when heated.

HAM:

**1 bone-in fully cooked
smoked ham, preferably
from the butt end, 8-10 lbs**

GLAZE:

**2 tablespoons unsalted butter
½ cup fresh pineapple juice
2 tablespoons white
wine vinegar
2 tablespoons packed golden
brown sugar
½ teaspoon ground ginger
½ teaspoon Chinese five spice
¼ teaspoon freshly ground
black pepper**

SAUCE:

**1½ cups sour cream
¼ cup prepared horseradish
3 tablespoons finely chopped
fresh chives
2 tablespoons Dijon mustard**

- Allow the ham to stand at room temperature for 30 minutes to 1 hour before grilling.
- Prepare the grill for indirect cooking over medium-low heat (about 325°F).
- In a medium saucepan over medium-high heat, melt the butter and cook until it begins to brown, 2 to 4 minutes. Immediately add the remaining glaze ingredients. Lower the heat to a simmer and cook for 5 to 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove the pan from the heat and set aside.
- Score the ham in a large crisscross pattern about ½-inch deep on all sides except for the cut side. Place the ham, cut side down, in a large disposable foil pan. Pour the glaze over the ham and into the pan. Cover the ham snugly with aluminum foil, crimping the foil around the rim of the pan. Cook the ham over indirect medium-low heat, with the lid closed, for 1½ hours. Meanwhile, make the sauce.
- In a small nonreactive bowl, whisk the sauce ingredients. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve. (The sauce can be made up to a day in advance and refrigerated, covered, until serving time.)
- After 1½ hours of cooking, remove the foil from the ham (but save the foil for later) and quickly spoon some of the glaze over the meat. Continue cooking, with the lid closed, until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the ham (not touching the bone) registers 120°F, 1 to 1½ hours more, spooning the glaze over the ham every 20 minutes or so. If the glaze gets too dark, cover the ham loosely with the saved aluminum foil for the remainder of the cooking time. Carefully transfer the ham in the pan onto a sheet pan. Tent the ham loosely with foil. Let rest for 15 to 30 minutes.
- Cut the ham into thin slices. If desired, drizzle some of the glaze over the slices. Serve the ham warm with the sauce on the side.

KALE AND POTATO SALAD

Makes 6 servings



This is
not your
average picnic
potato salad.
Make it ahead so
it's ready when
you are.

1 pound petite Yukon Gold potatoes, halved
 1/4 cup olive oil, divided
 1 shallot, halved and sliced
 3/4 pound asparagus, trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces
 1/4 cup white balsamic vinegar
 1/4 cup fat-free, plain Greek yogurt
 Salt, pepper, and sugar, to taste
 7 cups (1-inch pieces) green curly kale (tough ribs and stems removed)
 1/2 cup fresh scallions, chopped
 1/4 cup chopped walnuts
 1 ounce crumbled Gorgonzola cheese

- Preheat oven to 450°F with rack in upper third of oven. Toss potatoes with 1 tablespoon oil, half the shallots, salt and pepper and spread evenly on a baking sheet. Roast for 15 minutes, then add asparagus to baking sheet and roast 10 minutes more, or until potatoes are golden brown and tender.
- To make dressing, puree remaining olive oil, shallot, vinegar and yogurt in a blender or small food processor. Season to taste with salt, pepper, and sugar.
- While the vegetables are cooking, place 1 inch of water in a large pot. Bring to a boil, then add kale; cook for 1 minute or until kale is bright green and lightly wilted, tossing constantly with tongs. Drain excess water. In a large bowl, combine kale with scallions, cooked potatoes, and asparagus, and toss with dressing. Top with walnuts and Gorgonzola.

Recipe/photo courtesy of the U.S. Potato Board, potatogoodness.com

Dinners, too, should be rightly special – it is the holidays, after all – but not so fussy that they leave the cooks frazzled and unable to partake in the fun. For the main course, forgo turkey and serve ham. It's much easier to prep – no brining required – and fully cooked, so you just need to heat and eat (and use the grill to free up oven space).



For a “mock-tail” version, use sparkling cider instead of champagne.

Makes 1 serving

POMEGRANATE CHAMPAGNE COCKTAIL

1/2 oz. freshly squeezed pomegranate juice or store-bought refrigerated pomegranate juice (such as POM)
 1/2 oz. triple sec liqueur
 1 glass of dry champagne
 Pomegranate arils (seeds)
 Orange peel strip, optional

- Add pomegranate juice and triple sec liqueur to glass and top with champagne. Garnish with pomegranate arils and orange peel.

Recipe and photo courtesy of POM Wonderful, pomwonderful.com

Another trick: Plan side dishes that can be served at room temperature, so if that annual marathon Monopoly session goes even longer than expected, you're not scrambling last-minute to whip potatoes.

Here, the ham gets extra flavor from a spicy-sweet pineapple-juice glaze, a kiss of grill smoke, and a side of horseradish

sauce. The special-occasion potato salad is dressed up with asparagus, walnuts, blue cheese and the it-vegetable: kale, then tossed with a creamy yogurt-based dressing. And, finally, the ultimate holiday cocktail – champagne – gets gussied up with a splash of pomegranate juice. It'll definitely be a new tradition. **cl**



1



2



3



4



5

1. EXTRA CREDIT. Retrofitting a traditional masonry fireplace with a wood-burning insert redirects heat lost up the chimney back into the cabin. This one uses extra-efficient catalytic combustion for extra-long and extra-clean burning using less wood. Regency CI2600 Large Wood Insert, \$3,085, www.regencyfire.com, 800-442-7432

2. FORM & FUNCTION. Looks: The clean, minimalist lines and cylindrical shape of this wood burner work for both modern and rustic cabins. Brains: The entire stove rotates to direct the heat where you want it. Stuv 30 Compact Wood Stove, \$5,275, www.stuvamerica.com, 866-487-7888

3. OLD MEETS NEW. Bridging traditional and contemporary designs, this direct-vent gas fireplace combines classic rustic log set with linear styling, a horizontal firebox, clean trimwork, and a large glass front. Its remote is 100% wireless. Stellar Hearth Products CTL-58 Direct Vent Linear Gas Fireplace, \$4,400, www.stellarhearth.com, 952-224-4072

4. 2-FOR-1. This double-sided, wood-burning fireplace creates cozy focal points in two cabin rooms. The unit's innovative, patented air-control system helps light fires super fast. Supreme Opus Wood Burning Fireplace, \$3,832, www.supremem.com, 877-593-4722

5. HEARTH ART. This compact, gas-fueled, portrait-style fireplace hangs on the wall like artwork and brings the beauty of fire to kitchens, bedrooms, baths, and other nontraditional spaces.

Napoleon Vittoria GD19 Direct Vent Fireplace, \$1,499, www.napoleonfireplaces.com, 866-820-8686

6. SEEING GREEN. Reduced emissions and 100% recycled materials mean this wood-burning stove is green. Choice of operating modes to maximize efficiency and get more heat from less wood means it saves green. Your friends: green with envy. Vermont Castings Defiant FlexBurn Wood Burning Stove, \$3,084 to \$3,925 depending on color choice, www.vermontcastings.com, 800-867-0454

7. LOGS ARE SO YESTERDAY. Driftwood replaces a traditional wood log set in this super-efficient, long and narrow gas fireplace. Available in three widths, models 4415 and 6015 each heat over 2,000 square feet! The crushed-glass interior floor comes standard in one of three colors; talk to dealer about custom colors. Alternatives to driftwood logs include stones with driftwood twigs or traditional logs. Fireplace Xtrordinair HO Linear Gas Fireplace Series, starting at \$3,690, www.fireplacex.com, 425-609-2557

8. PRETTY IMPRESSIVE. This pellet stove is eco-friendly (fueled by recycled wood pellets; EPA clean-burning-certified), smart (touch-pad controls), efficient (heats up to 2,400 square feet), and convenient (extra-large hopper reduces refuelings and frees you up for cabin fun!). Harman Absolute43 Pellet Stove, \$3,899, www.harmanstoves.com, 800-664-3119

continues on page 70



Considering a Cabin Fireplace?

HERE'S THE SCOOP ON SOME NEW CHANGES

IN RESPONSE TO NEW REGULATIONS,

the hearth industry is making improvements to fireplaces and stoves sold today.

Starting this year, all new gas fireplaces and stoves with glass fronts must include a protective barrier if the glass surface temperature exceeds 172° F during operation. The barrier – which might be a second outer pane of glass or fine mesh screen – stays cool to the touch without obstructing the view of the fire. It's designed to protect young children, pets, and others from getting burned if they accidentally touch the hot glass.

Previously installed stoves and fireplaces are exempt but can be retrofitted with aftermarket screens (check with the manufacturer first to ensure it's compatible with your unit), or a freestanding gate, to prevent little hands from touching the glass. For more information, visit safefireplacetips.com.

To reduce pollution, the Environmental Protection Agency recently issued tighter clean-air standards, limiting particulate emissions on wood- and pellet-burning stoves and fireplace inserts to 2.5 grams per hour, down from 4.5 grams. New EPA-certified units are being phased in over the next five years and incorporate innovative clean-burning technologies such as catalytic combustion, which increases efficiency, extends burn times and burns off much of the particulate matter before it even goes up the chimney. These new hearth products will help improve air quality, particularly in cabin country where wood is often burned for heat.

Though the new standards do not affect hearth products already in use, cabin owners can reduce smoke pollution by building small, hot fires with seasoned wood. However, according to the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association, if your wood-burning stove or fireplace insert was manufactured in the 1970s or 1980s, you might want to consider replacing it; those units can emit more than 40 grams of particulate per hour. Visit hpba.org for more info on responsible wood burning. **CL**

– Lisa Readie Mayer





we asked you answered

We asked: Do you visit your cabin in the winter? If so, tell us about your slice of wintertime cabin living!

You answered: Our off-the-grid log cabin is at 8,100 feet in Colorado's Front Range, a little less than two hours from our home in Denver.

Although we use our cabin year-round, winter is a challenge. Cold temperatures (as low as -14°F last winter) can be tough on a house you don't live in full time. We rely entirely on 12-volt solar for our power, so we don't have the kind of electricity or heat necessary for protecting pipes during those spells.

Every improvement to our cabin must be in the context of it surviving bitterly cold temps for many days while we're gone. Insulation only slows the progress of cold, so there is no guarantee that even the highest R-value insulation will stop those temps from penetrating and freezing.

Our water is a 1,500-gallon cistern in our crawl space that is walled off. In that same space is our pump and our battery bank. The theory is that the thermal mass of the cistern will keep itself and the connected piping from freezing.

In practice, while the cistern itself only develops a thin crust of ice on the surface, the pipes and pump will freeze solid if not drained and, of course, eventually break. So, from trial (and some error), we have developed a list of eight check-out steps



when we leave the cabin in the winter to that ensure we have water when we return. The steps cover powering off the pump and draining the pipes, pump and water heater, and opening the sink traps.

Our toilet is an outhouse which handles the winter fine, although we're planning on replacing a traditional outhouse commode with a wet/dry model that will improve appearance and appeal, yet withstand the cold.

— Mike Walker



KINDLING CRACKER

\$100, northerntool.com

My family likes sitting around the fire pit, and I enjoy the pastime of chopping firewood and kindling. So I was able to put the Kindling Cracker through a good test.

Positives: I'm a fan of the Kindling Cracker, because I like the consistent sizes of kindling that I can create. I also like that the wood does not fly all over the yard when it's split. It was easy to use. I do not have to swing hard to split the wood, and I tested the Kindling Cracker by splitting several pieces of wet wood. I did not have to anchor it down, and I split the wood right on my grass. If pieces got stuck, I turned the unit upside down and pushed them right out.

Drawback: The only issue I have is sharpening – when it needs sharpening, it would have to be sharpened by hand.

— Brian R.



Kindling Cracker photo courtesy Northern Tool; Cabin photo courtesy Mike Walker

insulation innovations

**Save
energy
and
money!**

Does your cabin have the right stuff? If it's drafty, then probably not. Odds are, that rustic fish camp had little or no insulation when built. And even a newer, year-round cottage could probably benefit from more. Why? Because the right insulation in the right place is key to comfort. Insulation keeps heated or cooled air inside the cabin, and unwanted heat or cold out. Not only does that mean a cozier cabin, it can extend the use of a seasonal retreat. And who wouldn't welcome more time at the cabin?

Insulation is also a must for energy efficiency. According to the Department of Energy, heating and cooling account for almost half of utility bills in the average house. Even if you only use your cabin occasionally, adding insulation can reduce those costs significantly.

With recent insulation innovations, there's an array of products to choose from. These days, manufacturers compete to make eco-friendly materials with higher R-values (see related article on facing page).

Many incorporate recycled or renewable components, and eliminate toxins and allergens. Along with different materials, insulation comes in different shapes. Blanket, blown in, and spray foam are all great options for an existing cabin, depending on your budget. Here's a look at innovations in each:

BLANKET

(includes batts and rolls)

FIBERGLASS

Mention insulation and most folks think pink. The most common insulation today, fiberglass has been around since Owens Corning invented the stuff in the 1950s. It's inexpensive, lightweight, and easy for DIYers to fit between studs or joists.

Fiberglass insulation is made from melted glass that's spun into fibers held together with a binder. Typically, the binder contained



formaldehyde, which has been linked to cancer (see sidebar at below). But manufacturers like Owens Corning, CertainTeed, and Knauf have come out with alternative bio-based binders. Fiberglass blankets now also come in medium- and high- densities. These costlier options yield higher R-values: 3.6 to 4 per inch for high, vs. 3.2 for standard.

FORMALDEHYDE

The CDC has this to say: "Formaldehyde is known to cause cancer. The cancer of greatest concern is cancer of the nose and throat. Scientific research has not yet shown that a certain level of formaldehyde exposure causes cancer. However, the higher the level and the longer the exposure, the greater the chance of getting cancer. Exposure to formaldehyde might increase the chance of getting cancer even at levels too low to cause symptoms."

Fiberglass may have the lion's share of the market, but other materials are making inroads, so read on.

DENIM

Blue is green, when it comes to insulation. Recycled denim and cotton make up about 80% of UltraTouch Denim Insulation from Bonded Logic, Inc., bondedlogic.com. With an R-value of about 3.5 to 4 per inch, denim's thermal performance is on par with fiberglass. Unlike itchy fiberglass, it can be



installed with bare hands. Tip: Use a circular saw or a table saw with a fine tooth blade to cut textile insulation.

RECYCLED JEANS

BLUE JEANS GO GREEN is a denim recycling program created by Cotton Inc. Since 2006, more than a million pieces of donated denim have been recycled into UltraTouch insulation. The insulation is distributed to Habitat for Humanity affiliates across the country. To learn how your old jeans can "clothe" needy communities, visit bluejeansgogreen.org.



WOOL

Think of it as a sweater for your cabin. Wool fibers insulate by trapping air pockets. The fibers absorb and release moisture without reducing thermal performance. Wool costs more than other insulation, but it's nonallergenic, expands over time instead of settling, and has a comparable R-value of 3.5 per inch. Black Mountain USA in Pennsylvania manufactures Sheep Batt, Sheep Roll, Sheep Fill, and Sheep Rope for wood-framed and log homes. For more info: blackmountaininsulationusa.com.

OF LOGS & WOOL

Infused with borate to combat log rot and insects, wool insulation is popular with log home builders. Schroeder Log Home Supply in Grand Rapids, Minn., sells wool ropes and batts to handcrafters such as Top Knotch Log Homes in Grand Rapids, Koski Log Homes in Ontonagon, Mich., and Montana Log Homes in Kalispell, Mont. Wool roping is used in lateral grooves; batts in notches and for ceiling and stud wall insulation. "Wool is a resurging trend," notes John Schroeder. "Allergies that people may have to synthetic materials is a concern, while some customers are trying to keep as natural as possible."

BLOWN-IN (LOOSE-FILL)

Insulation that's blown into walls and attics generally performs better than batts. That's because bays (empty space) between studs and floor joists are not always uniform in size. Also, they may contain electrical boxes, wiring, and pipes. Standard-sized batts must be cut and fitted tightly around obstructions; any gaps or compression will reduce R-value. Loose fill (i.e., tiny particles of fiber) conforms to any shape.

Loose fill comes in bags, and is usually blown into attics or walls by contractors. Fiberglass and cellulose are the most



fotolia.com/minicel73 photo

common materials, but rock wool (slag), denim, and sheep's wool are also available. Proper installation is critical for the least amount of settling over time.

CELLULOSE

Modern cellulose is made from recycled newspaper (up to 85%), with borate added for fire and pest control. Cellulose caught on after the oil embargo in the '70s, but lost ground to fiberglass. Today, it's back in favor as a green product. Costing about the same as fiberglass, cellulose takes less energy to produce and has a slightly higher R-value.

Dense-pack cellulose (installed at 3.5 pounds per cubic foot) resists settling, air infiltration, and can be blown into closed cavities or open ones backed with netting. Dense-pack has an R-value of about 3.6 per inch.

SPRAY FOAM

Spray polyurethane foam (SPF) outperforms most other insulation, with R-values of 3.5 to 6 or 7 per inch. SPF starts as liquid; blowing agents cause the polyurethane to expand and actually provide most of foam's insulating



Icynene's new Pro Seal Eco is a closed cell SPF that's water-blown, for an R-value of 4.9 per inch.

properties. There are two types: closed cell and open cell. Open-cell foam uses water as the blowing agent; it remains flexible, and allows moisture to pass through. High-density closed-cell foam uses chemical blowing agents, is rigid, and nonabsorbent. It has the highest R-value, but is the most expensive insulation.

Newer closed-cell SPFs such as Demilec's Heatlok spray foam incorporate recycled plastic, along with small amounts of bio-based oils.

Contractors are using HeatLok in remote cabins in northern Minnesota and Wisconsin, states Matt Martinson of Demilac's Upper Midwest Region in St. Paul, Minn. "In many cases, the water lines are installed in unconditioned crawl spaces, and that often provides extremely cold floors and unprotected water lines. HeatLok solves both issues." Remodeling a lake house that's grandfathered in? "Adding HeatLok will increase the longevity of structures that cannot be rebuilt based on local jurisdiction," notes Martinson. "Many older cabins have 2x4 walls and stick-framed roofs – perfect for HeatLok's high R-value and added structural support."

Most closed-cell foams use hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) as the blowing agent. HFCs are nonozone depleting chemicals, but are potent greenhouse gases. Today, there's a new generation of hydrofluorolefin agents (HFOs) with low-global warming potential on the scene. **CL**

KNOW YOUR R-VALUE

R-VALUE IS A MEASURE OF Insulation's resistance to heat flow – the higher, the better. R-value is rated per inch of thickness. Multiply that by the number of inches installed, and you get the overall R-value. How much R-value do you need? That depends on the climate in your area, and also where you're installing insulation in the cabin. Attics, for example, have a different minimum R-value than walls.

The EPA's Energy Star program has a chart of recommended insulation levels for retrofitting wood-framed houses on its website: energystar.gov.

How do you know what insulation your cabin has already, and where should you add more? The DOE website has tools to help: energy.gov.

Attics and basements or crawl spaces are likely candidates. Insulation can also be retrofitted in walls – a good idea when remodeling.

When weighing insulation options, look for Energy-Star certified products and consider payback periods. Insulation must completely fill any cavity to achieve maximum R-value. Remember, insulation is only as good as the installation.

– All insulation articles by
Fran Sigurdsson



Winter Haven

Nestled into New York's Hudson Valley,

this 1,600-square-foot home resembles centuries-old

stone barns of the region. But with its glass wall and bow-arched beams,

the home is a contemporary model of green living. A certified passive-solar house
envisioned by BarlisWedlick Architects, the home doesn't rely on alternative energy producers

like solar panels or wind turbines. Instead, it's designed and sited to capture the sun's
warmth in the winter and remain shaded in the summer. Super-insulated walls, foundation
and roof maintain a comfortable interior temperature even on frosty winter nights. **cl**



FLOOR PLANS

WHERE
SCALE MEETS
FUNCTION

Designing a cabin comprises a number of different factors. There's the look or style. There's the amenities needed. And there's the overall size. The latter can be a tricky factor in that many cabin owners start out with a specific square footage in mind, but as they start to think about how they will actually use their cabin, the numbers can change—sometimes drastically. To better facilitate the design process, ask yourself a few questions:

How many people will generally be using this cabin? And how often will they be there? This can help determine the number of bedrooms necessary and where you may be able to utilize a multipurpose space instead.

Are there specific features that

need to be in place (e.g., a mud room to prevent outdoor activities from making their mark on the interior of the cabin) in order for the cabin to function more easily?

Do you plan to have many guests? You may need to rethink your kitchen layout and, more important, your food storage capabilities depending on how frequently you play host to large crowds.

Once you have a better idea of what spaces are essential and roughly how large they need to be, you can start to determine what the overall size of your cabin should be. To help you narrow down potential plans from there, we've segmented the floor plans featured in our magazine into three categories: less than 1,500 square feet, 1,500 to

3,000 square feet, and more than 3,000 square feet.

Each size offers something a little different. Small cabins tend to be simple but also incredibly efficient in their use of space, which adds a certain cozy quotient. Mid-sized plans offer a happy medium between small and monstrous, with the opportunity to add some additional amenities or expand on main spaces, such as kitchens. Larger plans can help create the ideal retreat you've always wanted, and all the space you could possibly need to enjoy your cabin and its surroundings.

To better visualize what the plan includes, images from select floor plans also appear on our website to show you different rooms and angles. Take a look at: MyWoodHome.com/CabinPlans. **cl**

floor plans



PATAK

2,075 square feet | 3 bedrooms | 2 ½ baths

The Patak is a traditional chalet style where a prow roof is nicely punctuated by a dressed up front shed dormer. Outside, a porch extends along the front of the home and is joined to the deck on the side. Perfect for a lot with a view, the soaring cathedral ceiling is banked with windows bringing Mother Nature in.



Main Level

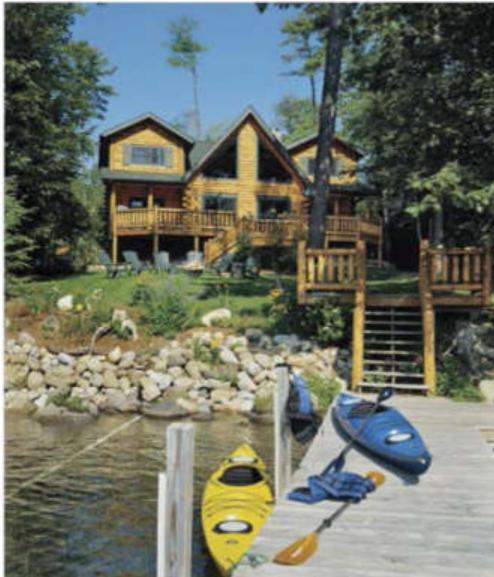


Upper Level



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THE LAKE HOUSE

2,096 square feet | 3 bedrooms | 2 ½ baths

The Lake House is designed to make a breathtaking view available from almost every space in the house. This model features an expansive great room, mud room/front entry, three bedrooms, two full and one half bathrooms all efficiently designed into 2,096 square feet. Two covered porches and an open deck make outdoor entertaining a breeze. The original Lake House was built on Lake George in New York State and easily conveys the Adirondack style of the region.



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floor plans

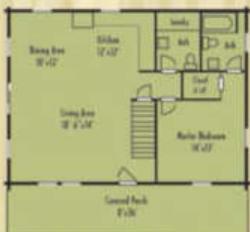
Clearwater

Complete Package Price
based on Oct. 1, 2014 price list:

\$78,050

YR-END SAVINGS

6x8 Log



26x36 • 1,586 sq ft
3 bedrooms • 2.5 baths



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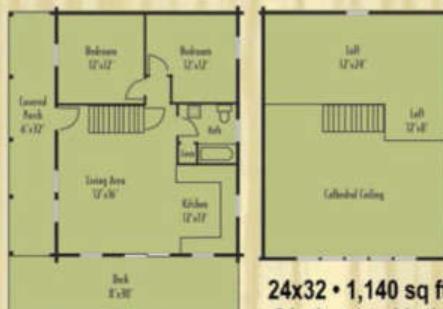
Swiftwater

Complete Package Price
based on Oct. 1, 2014 price list:

\$54,850

YR-END SAVINGS

6x8 Log



24x32 • 1,140 sq ft
2 bedrooms • 1 bath

photos may vary from actual design

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Complete Package Price
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\$21,600

YR-END SAVINGS

4x8 Log

Timber Trail

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14x20 • 392 sq ft
1 bedroom • 1 bath

Andersen



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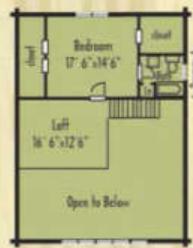
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YR-END SAVINGS
6x8 Log



Cheyenne

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Always the BEST Value!**



GrandView

Complete Package Price
based on Oct. 1, 2014 price list:

\$133,150
YR-END SAVINGS
6x8 Log



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photos may vary from actual design

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Andersen



American Owned Company

floor plans



Lake Geneva

Bedroom Up: 1 Bath Up: 1 ½

Bedroom Down: 2 Bath Down 1

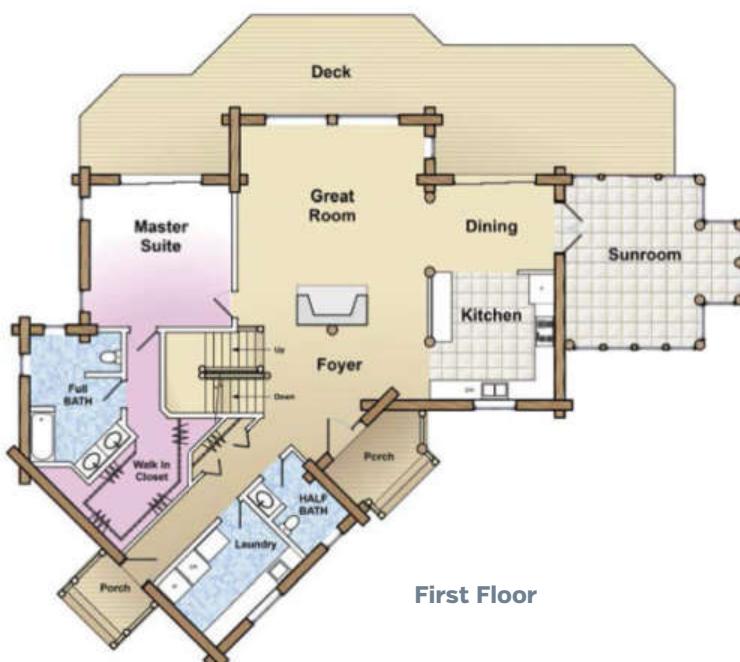
Optional: Garage

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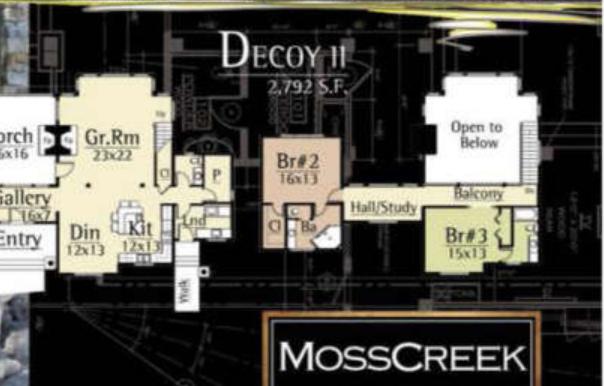
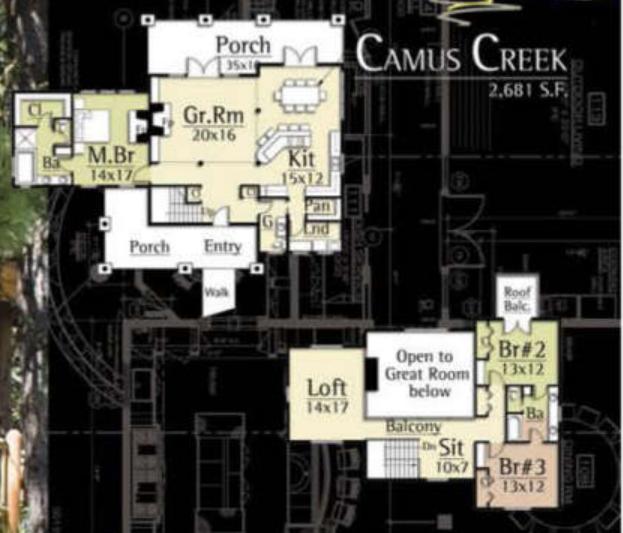
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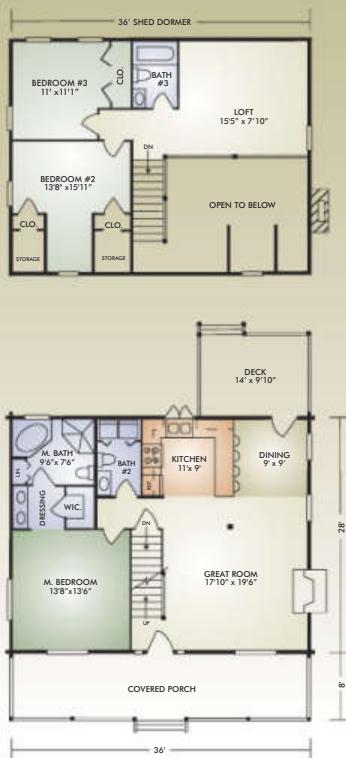

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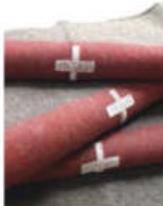


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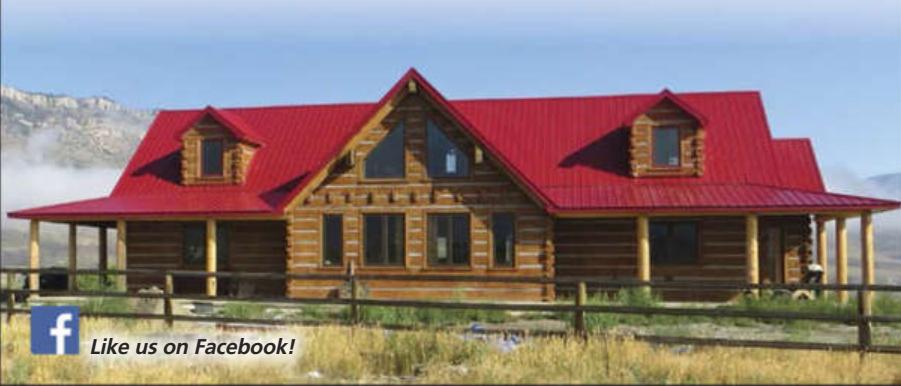
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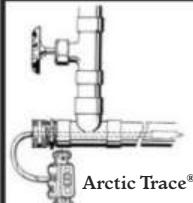
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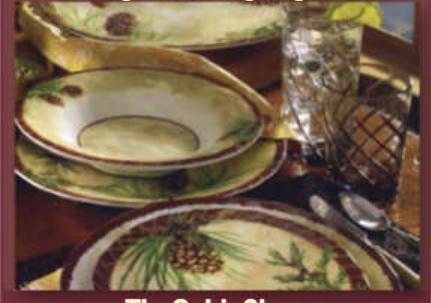
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New lake home w/300' sand beach, blue water views, private property on Wynne Lake at Giants Ridge Championship Golf & Ski Resort! E. facing views w/beach & fire pit. 4080 SF, 3BR+Loft/3BTH home w/attached garage. Biwabik, MN \$498,00



LAKE VERMILION FAMILY ESTATE

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- Designing a cabin with niches & nooks.
- Three cabin tours full of inspiration for your idea book.

Cabin maintenance

- Roof, windows, doors, furnace, water heater: repair or replace?
- The right tools: Choosing a pressure washer, generator and more.
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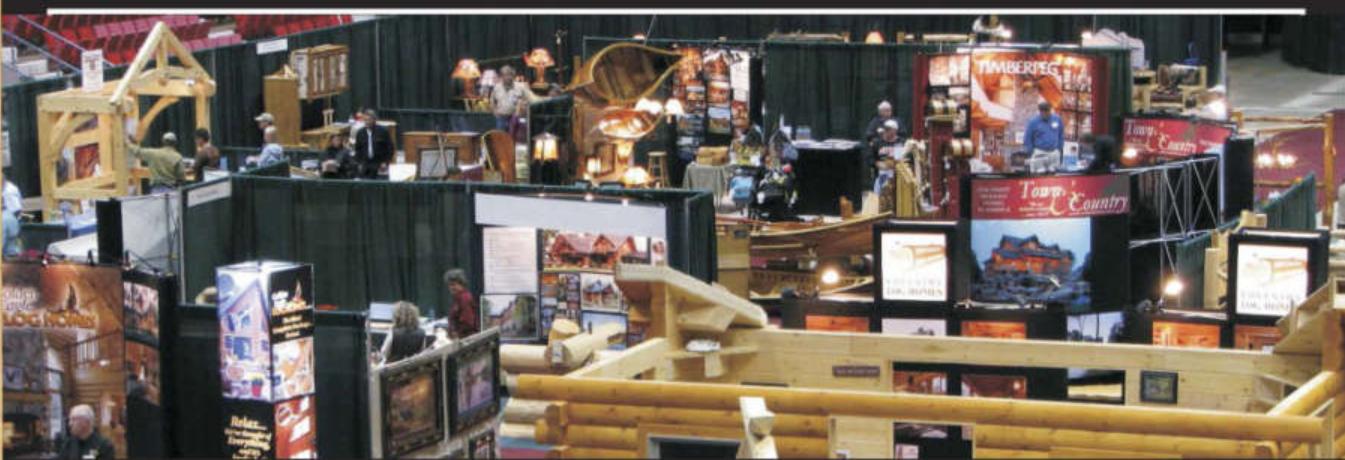
Cabin fun

- Gear guide: Prepare to hike!
- Canoes, kayaks, and SUPs: Making sense of all the choices.
- How to choose the right dock.
- Buying a boat: New or used?
- Shopping guide for grills and fire pits.

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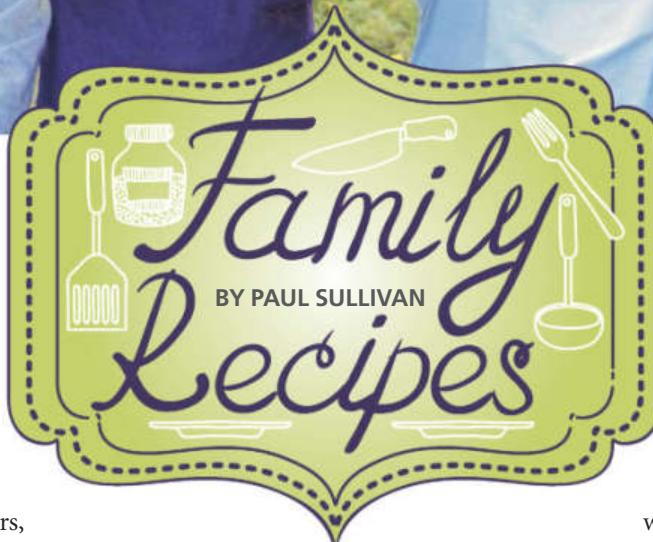
The author refers to this as "the four monkeys photo." L-R: Dale Sullivan, Paul Sullivan, Frank Sullivan, and Lois Diehl.

At a reunion last summer at my brother Frank's cabin, my sister, two brothers, and I reminisced fondly about our recently departed 98-year-old mother. I broke the circle of love, though, when I said she wasn't a very good cook, except for special occasions. My brothers, recalling her specialty of burnt liver and onions for supper, agreed.

Lois jumped in to defend her mother, "You little brats. Typical men. She raised four kids with very little help. And you never went hungry. You do realize," Lois said, "we never had much money. And don't forget she was always a working mother. You forget how little time she had when we were growing up. She was teaching school in the winter and running the resort in the summer. Every week she did laundry for 10 cabins, and ours too."

Lois paused a moment and looked up at Bucky, the whitetail head-and-shoulders mount.

"Mom taught 30 other little kids all day and then often stopped at Skinner's for some meat for supper for us. That, after driving 20 miles home on country roads, sometimes in a snowstorm. She never had enough time to plan, prep, and cook a



good meal. No Swanson TV dinners then, no microwaves. She had her own house to take care of, your laundry to do, helping you with your schoolwork. When she had to be a good cook, she was. Besides, Dad liked liver and onions."

Frank's wife, Linda, reached into a bookcase and pulled out a tattered, spiral-bound book and put it on the table. "Your mother used this cookbook all her life to prepare special-occasion dishes for company. When she went into assisted living, she passed it on to me. She said she was never a spur-of-the-moment cook who could cook by taste, kind of like playing music by ear. Mom needed her recipes.

"I'll bet you didn't know," Linda said, "Mom wrote notes in the margins around the recipes. She commented about your boyfriends and girlfriends, your spouses, the weather, who liked her special dish,

who didn't; about problems she thought you were having, and her hopes and dreams for you."

I asked Linda for the cookbook. In the index I looked for oyster dressing, one of my father's favorite dishes. One of her notes there was dated December 25, 1992. By then, ours was a large and scattered family. Mom wrote: "A Christmas miracle. All my children here today. Met Matthew, my first great-grand."

Mom's notes were not chronological. Alongside a fish casserole in entrees, she noted holding my newborn son. Beside apple strudel in desserts, she met my son's daughter. For her introduction to my bride-to-be, Pat, she baked a German chocolate cake. By yellow cake, she wrote, "Pat's funeral today. Brain tumor. So young. I worry about Paul." When I passed through town after a girlfriend kicked me out, Mom made me lasagna. "Paul alone again. I never liked Rita anyway."

Graduations, anniversaries, baby showers; birth, life, death. It was all there. We passed the cookbook around the table, chuckling privately at some memories, or reading them aloud to laughter – or to tears. Twitter in a cookbook.

My mother a bad cook? Naw. She had cooked up a rich, diverse dish of life. **cl**

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